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A BOOK ABOUT THE TABLE.

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VOL. II.



# A BOOK ABOUT THE TABLE.

BY

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"A BOOK ABOUT DOCTORS," "A BOOK ABOUT LAWYERS,"

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&c. &c.

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## THE SECOND VOLUME.

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# A BOOK ABOUT THE TABLE.

## CHAPTER I.

### FISH.

"The King's Bench Reports have cook'd up an odd dish,  
An action for damages, Fry against Fish,  
But sure, if for damages action could lie,  
It certainly must have been Fish against Fry."

MORNING CHRONICLE "EPIGRAMS."

"Le *white-bait*, poisson blanc, est à coup sûr un des mets les plus populaires de Londres. Je me rappelle avoir été invité, sans autre motif qu'invitation ordinaire, par un de mes amis qui arrivait de l'Inde, à venir manger les *white-bait* à Grennisch."—ALEXANDRE DUMAS, "GRAND DICTIONNAIRE DE CUISINE."

"At Greenwich, having already partaken of plain white-bait, I helped myself to some out of a second dish; it was devilled and fitted for skinning the tongue."—M. TAINÉ'S "NOTES ON ENGLAND," Translated by W. F. Rae.

TO discredit our ancestors, as judges of fish, it is enough to say that they sugared their oysters, and prized the pike more highly than any other fish. If the reader requires further evidence of their inability to appreciate the finer flavours of the inhabitants of the water, he may find it in the scores of old receipts for stews and messes, in which a dozen different kinds of fish were mingled, so that

it was impossible for the palate to distinguish the various ingredients of the dish.

Official records put it beyond question that the pike was thus honoured by our discerning forefathers. Edward the First's advisers gave the luce (*i.e.*, pike) a higher value than fresh salmon, and rated it at ten times the worth of the best turbot and cod. Though its market price fell in times of abundance, it was in great request for luxurious tables throughout the dark ages of our gastronomic history. One of Chaucer's worthies—the "frankelein" who "was Epicure's owen sone"—is especially commended for always having "many a breme and many a luce in stewe." In our eighth Henry's time, whilst a large pike would ordinarily fetch twice the price of a house lamb, a small one (*i.e.*, a pickerel) commonly sold for more than a fat capon. Indeed, so long as they ate fish from religious sentiment or servile submission to economic ordinances, the English knew little of the distinctive excellences of the finny creatures. On ceasing to devour them as good Christians or good citizens, they began to study and enjoy them as good epicures.

"Pike," says Mr. Hayward, "are capital if bled in the tail and gills as soon as caught; they die much whiter, and look better at table. Pike is capitally dressed at the White Hart, at Salisbury."

A familiar adage trains us to look for differences of taste and sentiment in culinary affairs. The epicure who thinks pike "capital" is all the more likely to have enough of the good thing, because another epicure thinks it a bad one. It may, however, be questioned whether pike can by any cooking be rendered "capital" to the fastidious feeder. Possibly Mr. Hayward only meant that the fish cooked in his way was capital in comparison with pike cooked otherwise. To form the most favourable opinion of pike, the reader should boil an eight-pound fish in *salt* water, and on the morrow, when it has cooled and "flakes" readily, fry the flakes with butter. Pike so managed is decent food, but not capital.

In using the old word "luce," readers should remember that in strict parlance it is not applicable to a young fish, or indeed to any pike whose growth was incomplete. The Elizabethan pike had seven ages. It was first called a fry, then a gilthead, then a pod, then a jack, then a pickerel, then a pike, and, finally, on attaining its full size, a luce. The salmon had four ages; beginning life as a gravellin, it became a salmon-peale, then a pug, and finally a salmon proper.

It was some pike-gorging glutton of the fifteenth century who threw a large pike into the Kaiserwag lake, after fitting its neck and gills with a brass ring, bearing the inscription, "I am the fish which



was first of all put into this lake by the hands of the Governor of the Universe, Frederick II., the 5th October, 1230." The joke succeeded beyond the hopes of the practical jester. After astounding the fisherman, who had the good fortune to net it, this collar-wearing pike was exhibited to thousands of credulous believers in the lying legend, and figured for generations amongst the marvels of the universe. A score of books have been written to demonstrate the truth or falseness of its alleged history; and the authors who allude cursorily to its capture and the ensuing controversy may be counted by hundreds. What passed for the pike's skeleton was long exhibited in the Mannheim Cathedral, until a prying, meddlesome anatomist, own brother to Wordsworth's "physician," discovered that the backbone of the wonderful relic had been lengthened to the requirements of the story with vertebræ which could not have pertained to the big fish during its life.

Our ancestors' barbarism in serving oysters with sugar and honey was due to the influence of the Romans, who were guilty of the same outrage against decency. By the way, the Romans have gained far too much credit for gastronomic discernment from their readiness to buy British oysters at a hundred sesterces per basket, a price that by comparison makes our best natives, at three shillings a dozen,

things of canine cheapness. The Roman pontiffs, like reverend gourmands of more recent periods, delighted in eating money, and would have cared less for British oysters if they could have bought them for a trifle. Epicures who improved our "natives" by coating them with honey, and keeping them until they were putrid, cannot have relished, or even had a sense for, the delicate characteristics of the fish. Not that all the gourmands took their oysters, sweet or rotten. But these tastes of a few morbid epicures rouse a suspicion that the one fault of the oyster's flavour was generally mistaken by the old Romans for its distinguishing merit. None of their several modes of cooking the oyster were intelligent. Nor is there much to admire in Apicius's simple and rather clumsy method of preserving the fish, although the process is chiefly accountable for his gastronomic fame. He merely washed his oysters in vinegar, and packed them in vessels dressed with pitch. Thus prepared and packed for the voyage from Britain to Rome, and for transmission from Rome to the country-houses of her gourmets, our "natives" were strongly redolent of pitch and something worse before they came to table.

The ancients, however, did well in using raw oysters as a pre-prandial whet. They were eaten for this purpose at Athens and Rome. There is no

evidence that the English mediævalists followed so good an example, though the learned author of the "Tabella Cibaria" went too far when he accused them of neglecting their fat and juicy "natives." There was never a time when our epicures disdained to cultivate, or at least to plunder, the oyster-bed, and Elizabethan literature abounds with evidence of the high esteem for oysters in Shakespeare's London. In his notes on the English capital, Paul Hentzner says, "The *best* oysters are sold here in great quantities." Gastronomers had already forbidden the consumption of oysters in the hot months whose names contain no letter R. After noticing the varieties of fish caught in the Thames—which in his days afforded barbels, trout, chevin, perch, smelts, bream, roach, dace, gudgeon, flounders, shrimps, and carp, as well as salmon—Harrison observes, "Albeit our oysters are generallie forborne in the foure hot moneths of the yeare, that is to saie, Maie, June, Julie, and August, which are void of the letter R; yet in some places they be continuallie eaten, where they be kept in pits, as I have knowen by experience."

Oysters were neglected in these months not only for their want of flavour and condition, but also because they were thought provocative in hot weather of the same immoralities as in France are attributed to excessive indulgence in mackerel. In



his “Dyet’s Dry Humour,” Buttes notices this ill effect of oysters in the hot season. It is strange how divers kinds of fish—albeit commended by the Church as food fit for religious seasons—have been accused of stimulating vicious appetites and encouraging evil propensities. Salmon had formerly an evil fame for disposing its eaters to drunkenness, whilst giving them dyspepsia.

Remarking on the old ordinance against oysters, Grimod de la Reynière insisted that, out of regard to their defective condition, they should be excluded from the epicurean table from the beginning of May till the beginning of December. “Nous ne conseillerons à personne d’en manger en Septembre ; elles n’y sont ni assez fraîches ni assez grasses pour piquer la sensualité d’un gourmand. Ce n’est guère qu’au commencement de Décembre qu’elles sont vraiment dignes de figurer sur sa table.”

But whilst forbidding oysters in August, social sentiment declares with singular inconsistency that they come into season on the fifth day of that month, *i.e.*, on St. James’s Day (old style), when the priests of Catholic England blessed the apple-trees, and commended their fruit to the saint’s protection, in the terms of a formal prayer and benediction preserved in the Sarum Manual. The patron-saint of apple-trees in our Catholic time,

St. James also became in a comically irregular way the patron-saint of our oyster-beds.

No pilgrim visited the shrine of St. James at Compostella without taking away with him a hallowed scallop-shell. The fish, abounding in the adjacent sea, was the saint's special care; its shell was the emblem of service at his altar. Throughout Christendom, wherever a mess of scallops were served to a pious traveller, the saint was thanked for the wholesome food. By the pilgrim who had earned the right to bear one, the sanctified scallop was an amulet against evil spirits, a memorial of pious adventure, and a badge of honour. It was also the cup from which he drank at the way-side spring, and the spoon with which he took his share of pot-luck at the Pilgrim's Inn. To his dying day he often used it as his spoon and cup. Erasmus in the "Pilgrimages" was jocose about the scallop-shells brought to England from Compostella. But the pilgrim, who knew little of the scholar and less of his writings, continued to be known

"By his scallop shell and hat,  
And by his sandal shoon."

And on the return of St. James's Day the saint's devotees raised at street-corners, in his honour, mimic temples that were constructed of scallop-

shells. A candle having been placed in one of these scallop-shell "grottoes," way-farers were solicited for pence to defray the cost of the emblematical taper. "Please, Sir, think of the grotto, and give the good saint a candle." The earlier grottoes were made altogether of scallop-shells. But either for want of a sufficient supply of the proper material, or because the smaller shells besides being plentiful, could be used effectively in the details of a grotto, builders in course of time combined scallop-shells and oyster-shells in the toy-edifices. The two kinds of shells having been thus brought together, the one soon imparted its sacredness to the other; and the Reformation having put a stop to the Compostella pilgrimages and the influx of hallowed shells of the larger kind, St. James's grottoes were ere long built altogether with oyster-shells. Henceforth the populace regarded oysters as enjoying the saint's special care, and to justify the architectural use of new *shells* on the saint's day, discovered that oysters came, in a certain sense, into season some four weeks before they were good for eating. The fish might be poor fare, but the shells were wanted for grottoes in the first week of August. When it had thus become the fashion to open oysters for the sake of their shells in an anciently prohibited season, social sentiment speedily discovered a reason for eating the oysters. "Whoever eats oysters on

St. James's Day will never want money," runs the proverb, which the grotto-makers invented to discredit their antagonists, who declared it wrong to open oysters in a month without an R. During a considerable portion of our quite recent history we had laws forbidding oysters to be eaten before the 25th of July, new St. James's Day. But these laws, whether originating in Acts of Parliament, or in conventions sanctioned by the legislature, have been abolished; and at present oysters may be lawfully taken and sold the whole year round.

Authorities differ as to the right number of oysters for a pre-prandial whet. Six oysters are enough to rouse the appetite of ordinary feeders; but gourmands have been known to prelude a heavy dinner with many dozens. Baron Graham, the placid judge of whom Jekyll said "No one but his sempstress could ruffle him," on learning the special virtue of uncooked "natives," inquired how many he should take for an appetite. "Eat away at them till you are hungry," was the reply. The Baron, who could never see a joke or a barrister's argument, acted on his instructions. After disposing of ten dozen, he remarked with mild plainiveness to an observer of his proceedings. "Something must be wrong in me, I have eaten one hundred and twenty oysters, and 'pon my

honour, I don't think I am quite as hungry as when I began."

Brillat-Savarin's preprandial whet seldom exceeded three or four dozen oysters; but when he entertained the Sieur Laperte at a *tête-à-tête* dinner, he ate a thirteenth dozen in deference to his guest's special gastronomic passion. Laperte, who had vowed to eat his *soûl* of oysters, disposed of thirty-two dozen without fully accomplishing his purpose, and then turned his attention to dinner with powers neither weakened nor embarrassed by the prelude. "Nous dînâmes," says Brillat-Savarin of his friend's demeanour after the oysters, "et il se comporta avec la vigueur et la tenue d'un homme qui aurait été à jeun." The reader needs no reminder of the Vicomte de Vieil-Castel's whet of twenty-four dozen "d'huîtres d'Ostende." It was over the grave of such an one that a friendly hand put this inscription.

"Tom, whom to-day no noise stirs,  
Lies buried in these cloisters;  
If, at the last trump,  
He does not quickly jump,  
Only cry 'Oysters.'

Though he relished oyster-sauce, and commended oysters as a flavouring ingredient of beef-steak pudding, Dr. Kitchiner resembled most epicures of his time in valuing the "native" chiefly for its



power to revive a jaded appetite, when taken in the freshness of life before the advent of soup. "Those," he observes, "who wish to enjoy this delicious restorative in its utmost perfection, must eat it the moment it is opened, with its own gravy in the under shell; if not eaten *while absolutely alive*, its flavour and spirit are lost! The true lover of an oyster will have some regard for the feelings of his little favourite, and will never abandon it to the mercy of a bungling operator." It is still the custom of Lincoln's Inn Hall in the terms when oysters are seasonable, to place a barrel of natives on the bar table, some twenty minutes before the dinner-hour on a certain day of each week. Any barrister of the Inn may help himself to oysters from the barrel, but he must open them himself, a limitation of his privilege that determines many a young lawyer to leave the barrel alone. Oysters are delicious and their shells are useful; but nothing can be said in behalf of such a compound of fish and grit as a bungling operator at the Lincoln's Inn table often puts between his teeth.

"What capital things oysters would be," said the wit, "if we could only feed our servants on the shells." Some fifteen years since, Mr. Frank Buckland observed enthusiastically at a club-dinner "May I live to bring the oyster to every poor

man's door!" "The shells are there already," rejoined a friend, duly mindful of Mr. Samuel Weller's philosophical speculations on the mysterious affinity of poverty and oyster shells. Alas, the oyster, of any kind, is further than ever from the poor man's table, and the native is fast becoming the luxury of none but millionaires. When it has passed beyond the reach of the moderately prosperous, it will be more than ever delicious to those of the plutocrats whose selfish pleasures are heightened by the consideration of misery, just as the saints of heaven were said by the gentlest of Anglican prelates to feel their felicity most vividly when reminded of the tortures of hell. "I should enjoy my expensive dinners much more," said an unamiable epicure, "if I did not know that a poor man may dine fairly well for a trifle, and that hunger can make almost any meal palatable."

In ancient times, potentates were quick to claim for their own plates whatever was best of the creatures provided for man's use. The sturgeon owes its royal rank to this royal selfishness. Gatis of Syria forbade her subjects to buy sturgeon, or any other prime fish, until she had exercised, or declined to exercise, her right of pre-emption. In England the sturgeon has been styled royal ever since Henry the First reserved it for his special board, as a creature too superb for the feasts of vassals. The

old kings of France were also of opinion that Providence designed the grandest of eatable fishes for regal feeders. The Parisian *poissardes* used to present their monarch with a sturgeon every year, and portraits of the sturgeons thus put upon his table were preserved in the archives of the state. Changing its style with the times, the sturgeon became Imperial under the first Napoleon, and often appeared at the banquets of the Imperial arch-chancellor. It once happened that Cambacérès received on the morning of a grand dinner two prodigious sturgeons, one weighing 162 livres, the other 187 livres. Ever frugal and ostentatious in his hospitalities, the great epicure contrived that both fish should be *shown*, but only one eaten at the feast. The smaller sturgeon, dished as though it were cooked, was first borne towards the table by four valets, preceded by a single flutist and two violinists, playing a suitable air. Each of the valets bore in one hand a flaming torch, whilst his other hand supported the dish. A Swiss, with halberd in hand, led the procession. To the delight of the company, the enormous fish was conveyed thus pompously to the top of the table, when to their dismay it slipped from the dish to the floor. Obeying instructions, one of the four liveried bearers had made a false step. In a trice the fish was taken from the ground, and carried away as unfit for the table, whilst the

guests deplored the accident. An interval of two minutes, and the larger sturgeon was brought in with a concert of flutes and violins. *Two* flutes and *four* violins proclaimed its superiority to the fish which had been attended by only three musicians. In all other respects, the second procession resembled the first. Another version of the same incident is given in "The Art of Dining," by Mr. Hayward, Q.C., who substitutes two huge turbot for the two prodigious sturgeons, and makes Cardinal Fesch officiate as host instead of the Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès. It is enough to allude to Domitian's monstrous turbot, celebrated in Juvenal's fourth satire.

Worshipped in ancient days by the Egyptians, the eel is honoured abundantly by modern epicures. By the way, it is strange how few cooks and fishermen are aware that to reduce the writhing creature to passive stillness it is only necessary to cut off the tip of the tail. Remove ever so small a piece of the tail, and a child may be trusted to handle it. Stricken with paralysis, it is heedless of music, which is said to be so powerful over its species, that eels may be lured to nets by the melodies of fishermen. The Scottish harper who "harp'd a fish out o' the sa't water" performed no great marvel, if we may credit all the stories of carp and chad drawn to destruction by the music of bells and castanets.

There is no recorded case of a fish voluntarily offering itself to the carver's knife on the ringing of the second dinner-bell ; but at Rotterdam and other places tame carp are quick in answering their keeper's call when he summons them to a meal. In some parts of Germany it is the custom to fit nets with little rows of bells, whose chiming is believed to attract certain kinds of fish.

The perch does not care much for music, though he will respond to raps on the side of his tank ; but Mr. Cholmondeley Pennell, a capital writer about fish, asserts on good grounds that, however insensible to harmony, a perch may be charmed by its own eye. On removing a hook from the jaws of a greedy little perch, he saw one of the creature's eyes adhering to the metal. The fish, too small for the pot, having been restored to its native water, Lake Windermere, Mr. Pennell baited his hook with the eye so unfortunately torn from the fish. The pain of the accident must have been trivial, for scarcely three minutes had passed since it was thrown back into the water, when the maimed perch again gorged the hook baited with the eye. Was the creature fascinated by its own eye ? or was it animated by a reasonable desire to recover a property of which it had been unjustly deprived.

Mr. Hayward, no mean authority, asserts that, though pond carp acquire a muddy taste, a fat



river carp is a dish for a prince. M. Verdelet de Bourbonne was so fond of carps' tongues that he once bought three thousand carps, whose tongues were extracted and cooked into a single dish. The carp, "bedroped with gold" (Pope), has carried off more than his due share of authors' flattery. The John Dorée, beloved by Quin, is another fish which has been commended extravagantly. Even its external disfigurements have been accounted virtues. Like the haddock, disdained by Poodle Byng, it is said to bear the marks of St. Peter's fingers. As for the John's "wrinkled and depressed shape," it was other and lovelier before St. Christopher put a heavy foot upon it. The whiting has been praised more discreetly, and justifies the eulogies of its admirers. Mr. Disraeli, whose novels contain many excellent remarks on cookery, calls it "the chicken of the deep." Red mullet is so perfect in itself that it can scarcely have been improved by the sauce which Ude invented for its benefit. "He refuses to pay sixpence for my sauce!" the indignant cook exclaimed, when an economical member of Crockford's had struck the item from his bill. "Does he imagine that red mullets come out of the sea with my sauce in their pockets." However objectionable as a needless interference with a natural flavour, Ude's sauce for red mullet was superior to the Spanish sauce which James the Second magnified as

the *one* proper relish for flesh, fowl, and fish. "He did mightily magnify his sauce," Pepys says of the Duke of York (1668-9), "which he did then eat with everything, and said it was the best universal sauce in the world, it being taught him by the Spanish Ambassador, made of some parsley and dry toast, beat in a mortar, together with vinegar, salt, and a little pepper!" Giles Rose had reason to think meanly of the Duke's gastronomic perception. The man who could admire such a sauce deserved to lose his three kingdoms.

Whether "fresh drawn frae the Forth" or newly caught in Yarmouth waters, "caller herring," those "lives o' men," as the ballad called them with fine pathos, are "bonny fish and dainty faring." Like potatoes, they must be taken from the fire as soon as they are "done." Dished at the happy moment, and served in season with plain melted butter, they are always acceptable to the epicure, who can appreciate what is good although it is cheap. Salted herrings, when cured delicately, are no mean food. One of the *seasonable* dishes for Easter at the old English table was "a red herring riding away on horseback, *i.e.*, a herring ordered by the cook, something after the likeness of a man on horseback, in a corn-sallad." Best at breakfast, the bloater is not out of place at other meals. Seventy years since it was commonly served with

the cheese in the after-course of grand dinners, as a dainty that cleared the palate and revived it for the enjoyment of port wine. Ay, more, the three-bottle men of the Regency would sometimes pause at the "finish" of the second bottle, and prepare for the third by eating a large-roed bloater. And in doing so, our grandfathers were only following the example of the Elizabethan toppers, who honoured the red-herring as a whet for drinking. It has been already observed that the Elizabethans also used salt bacon for the same purpose, a practice usual in France during the sixteenth century. "Give," says Rabelais in "Gargantua," "a synonymon for a gammon of bacen. It is the compulsory of drinkers; it is a pully. By a pully-rope wine is let down into the cellar, and by a gammon into the stomach." In their note on this passage Urquhart and Motteux remark, "Thus we say, a red-herring is a shoeing-horn to a pot of ale."

Honourable for its gastronomic services, the bloater is even more respectable as one of the sources of our national prosperity. Cheap food for the million, as well as choice fare for the children of luxury, herrings have for centuries enlarged our wealth and helped to sustain our commercial credit. Affording employment to thousands of simple fishermen, our herring fisheries preserve several of our maritime towns from decay, whilst maintaining the

best nurseries of our navy and "mercantile marine." "I am a good Protestant and abhor the Pope; but when there shall be no Catholics, *what* shall we do with our herrings?" exclaimed a member of the House of Commons with natural alarm and fervour, on being assured that Pius the Sixth's expulsion from Rome would be soon followed by the extinction of the Catholic Church and faith. The House fell into long and riotous laughter, in which the orator refused to join. A Norfolk squire, who owned houses in Yarmouth and half-a-dozen villages on the eastern coast, he trembled for the "interest" that, flourishing on the errors of the Papacy, enabled him to keep fox-hounds in his native county. The "upper ten" of Yarmouth have been facetiously termed "the bloater aristocracy." May they long continue to justify the pungent description.

To pass from herrings to whitebait, the fish which Alexandre Dumas once ate at "Grennisch." Naturalists have at length decided that instead of being a distinct species, whitebait are the young fish of half-a-score different kinds of fish. But no one can say when the taste for "bait" first began to show itself in the gourmands of our capital. The Ministerial Whitebait dinner, an institution destroyed by Mr. Gladstone and restored by Mr. Disraeli, had its origin in the snug fish-dinners which Sir Robert Preston used to give to Pitt and Old George Rose,

first at his Dagenham Reach Cottage, and then at a Greenwich tavern. But there is no evidence that whitebait was ever served at the earlier—ay, or the later—fish-feeds of these three Elders of the Trinity House. The “Austerlitz look” may have covered the great statesman’s countenance ere the first bait was cased with batter. One is reluctant to think that the Premier who instituted the ministerial banquet never tasted the dainty dish which for several decades has been the chief delicacy of the repast. But in the absence of any menu or note to settle the question, it must remain doubtful whether whitebait was known to the minister who originated the cabinet fish-dinners. It is certain that whitebait was not largely eaten by our epicures in Pitt’s time. Kitchiner’s silence respecting the fish is conclusive on this point. The author of “The Cook’s Oracle,” who died in 1827, would not have failed to notice the bait, had it been in great demand when he published his book, or at any date of his period.

Always ready to decry English cooks and cookery, Alexandre Dumas insists that, instead of being a peculiarly British delicacy, our whitebait is identical with the Italian *yanchette*, the *poutin* of Nice, and the *poisson blanc* of Bordeaux. If he is right in this matter, the people of Nice and Bordeaux should be thankful for their good fortune. But whitebait is one of the few culinary facts not understood in



France. It is also a fact on which no Frenchman is competent to form an opinion. When he talks about "bait," M. Taine is as irrational as Alexandre Dumas.

Wherever caught, whitebait are worthless unless skilfully cooked. No other kind of fish needs so much care, knowledge, and dexterity in the preparer. The modern Amphitryon, who has no *artiste* specially trained to cook "bait," should never put them on his table. "Sent in" from the kitchen of even an able pastry-cook, whitebait are always defective in crispness or internal juice, a short journey being enough to injure them when cooked. Prepared by a cook without the requisite special experience, they are always disappointing, if not absolutely abominable. Messed up by an inept hand in the general frying-pan, they sometimes result in a stuff that looks like a mixture of burnt peas and soot. "My dear Sir, you are passing the whitebait," a host once observed to a candid friend. "Indeed," was the rejoinder, "I never before heard you call black white." The free speaker was never again asked to take "bait" of any kind at the table for which these dusky whitebait were provided.

## CHAPTER II.

## JOINTS AND STEAKS.

"A sirloyn of beef was set before him, (so knighted saith tradition, by this King Henry), on which the king laid lustily."—FULLER'S "CHURCH HISTORY."

"Our Second Charles of fame facete  
On loin of beef did dine;  
He held his sword, pleas'd, o'er the meat,  
Arise thou fam'd Sir Loin."

THE "NEW SIR JOHN BARLEYCORN."

"If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well  
It were done quickly."

MACBETH.

"Le véritable bifteck, comme il se fait en Angleterre."—"L'ART DU CUISINIER."

"Nous faisons notre bifteck avec un morceau de filet d'aloyau, tandis que nos voisins prennent, pour leurs biftecks, ce que nous appelons la sour-noix du bœuf, c'est-à-dire le rump-steak."—"DICTIONNAIRE DE CUISINE."

LONG after they had emerged from what Mr. Richard Swiveller would call their "native pot," joints were served at the English table with sauces that would now be thought inappropriate to their flavours. In the seventeenth century our ancestors dressed boiled chickens with verjuice (of crabs or sour grapes), and took mustard with mutton. Seasoning roast beef with pepper, ginger, and

verjuice, as well as mustard, they disguised lamb with mustard and sugar, in default of mint sauce—a modern invention.

The loin of beef was highly esteemed by the Elizabethan epicures, and there are apocryphal stories of loins that figured with stately massiveness at banquets given in the days of the earlier Tudors.

In his "Church History," Fuller tells how Henry the Eighth, disguised as a gentleman of the Royal Guard, seated himself at the Abbot of Reading's dinner-table, and ate so largely of a noble loin that the abbot declared he would give willingly a hundred pounds to have his guest's appetite and egregious power of eating. A few weeks later the Abbot was seized, brought to London, and thrown into the Tower, where he was kept for several days on bread and water. When this diet had made him vehemently desirous of better fare, a roast sirloin was set before the prisoner, who forthwith fed off it with equal gust and greediness. Surprised by the timely arrival of the meat, the Abbot was less agreeably astonished, at the close of his long meal, by the appearance of the same portly beef-eater who had visited Reading Abbey. "Sir Abbot, I have cured you of your want of appetite, and claim my fee," cried the stalwart gentleman. On learning that his physician was also his sovereign, the Abbot lost no time in promising to pay the money, and

craving pardon for the freedom of his speech about His Highness's gluttony.

According to a tradition noticed in Fuller's version of this story, the loin of beef acquired its knightly style from Henry the Eighth, who, in delight at a magnificent piece of the overloin, laid his sword instead of a carving-knife upon its steaming surface. Later sovereigns have been credited with the same act. In the middle of the seventeenth century James the First was often mentioned as the humorous king who dubbed the piece of meat; and in ignorance of Henry's title to figure in history as the giver of the honour, Richardson says authoritatively in his dictionary, "Surloin or sirloin, the loin of beef so entitled by King James the First." The second Charles, however, is the sovereign to whose social fame this anecdote has clung most tenaciously. Again and again, by gossip-mongers and grave historians, has it been told how the Merry Monarch convulsed a knot of courtiers with merriment by knighting a loin of beef; and only a few years since a painter of considerable ability exhibited on one of the Royal Academy's walls a picture of Charles the Second in the act of conferring the distinction on the fortunate joint.

The explanation of the word having been indicated, it is needless to observe that the "sir" of the

sirloin is nothing but the prefix accorded to half a hundred familiar words of our language. Surprise, surmount, surplus, surplice, surname, survival, are instances of this common use of a prefix which was often spelt with *i* instead of *u* in the days of loose orthography. In the old cookery books "sirloin" is spelt in the one as often as in the other way. The same was the case in the general literature of the last century; and although it is now-a-days seldom written "surloin," the word so spelt appears in our best dictionaries. Webster and Richardson give both spellings. Johnson, strangely, makes no mention of sirloin or surloin; but, in connection with the foregoing remarks on the twofold orthography of the prefix, readers should observe that he occasionally spells it with "u" in words where that spelling is at present obsolete, if not inadmissible. For instance, he allows us to write either "surname" or "sirname." The latter mode of spelling the additional name may of course be defended on the ground that a patronymic is a *sire*-name.

Though it was no feature of the earlier Old English cuisine, and is therefore much less ancient than the idolater of roast beef would like us to think it, the sirloin is a joint of respectable antiquity. Seen occasionally on the Tudor tables, it appeared at least once a fortnight on the board of every wealthy Londoner of Charles the Second's time.



The “piece of roast beef” which Misson mentions amongst the ten or twelve sorts of common meat which infallibly take their turns at the table of the middling sort of people, was usually taken from the loin of the ox. The sirloin was also a joint for highly fashionable banquets at any time subsequent to the first Charles’s accession. It figures in Robert May’s menu for Christmas day, which runs thus :—

“Oysters at the entry.

“*First Course.*—1. Collar of brawn. 2. Stewed broth of mutton and marrow-bones. 3. A grand sallet. 4. A pottage of caponets. 5. A breast of veal in stoffado. 6. Boiled partridges. 7. Chine of beef, or *surlain roast*. 8. Minced pies. 9. A jegote of mutton with anchovy sauce. 10. A made dish of sweetbreads. 11. A roast swan. 12. A pasty of venison. 13. A kid with a pudding in his belly. 14. A steak-pie. 15. A haunch of venison roasted. 16. A turkey roast and stuck with cloves. 17. A made dish of chickens in puff paste. 18. Two bran geese roasted. 19. Two large capons, one larded. 20. A custard.

“Oranges and lemons.

“*Second Course.*—1. A young lamb or kid. 2. Two couple of rabbits, two larded. 3. Soust pig with tongues. 4. Three ducks, one larded. 5. Three pheasants, one larded. 6. A swan pye. 7. Three brace of

partridges, three larded. 8. Made dish in puff paste. 9. Bolonia sausages and anchovies, and mushrooms, and caviare, and pickled oysters in a dish. 10. Six teels, three larded. 11. A gammon of Westphalia bacon. 12. Ten plovers, five larded. 13. Quince pie, or warden pie. 14. Six woodcocks, three larded. 15. A standing tart in puff paste, preserved fruits, and pippins. 16. A dish of larks. 17. Six dried neats' tongues. 18. Sturgeon. 19. Powdered geese. 20. Jellies."

Plum-pudding is here conspicuous by its absence, a fact which at least shows that the rich compound was no such prime article of Christmas fare in the middle of the seventeenth century as it became in Georgian England, and still is. The pudding that invariably preceded, or followed, roast beef at a "family dinner" in William the Third's time was a plum-pudding. Misson describes it as consisting of "flower, milk, eggs, butter, sugar, suet, marrow, raisins, &c.," and says it was either baked in an oven, or boiled *with* the meat. The Londoners of Misson's day were enthusiastic admirers of this preparation. "It is a manna," says the French refugee, "that hits the palates of all sorts of peoples, a manna better than that of the wilderness, because the people never weary of it. Ah, what an excellent thing is an English pudding! To come in pudding-time is as much as to say to come in the most lucky

moment in the world." In their enthusiasm for the familiar food, Misson's friends used to exclaim fervently, "Blessed be he that invented pudding!" Perhaps Misson was the authority on whom Alexandre Dumas relied when he wrote seriously in the "*Dictionnaire de Cuisine*." "Plum-pudding—Mets farineux sans lequel il n'y a pas de bon repas en Angleterre." But the pudding celebrated by Misson was no peculiar feature of Christmas cheer. Always popular, it was not in especial demand at that season. Elsewhere in this work it has been remarked that the germs of the modern plum-pudding may be found in the mediæval cuisine, and that plum-porridge maintained its old place on the festal board almost to the close of the last century.

Accounted the chief of joints by our Carolinian gourmands, the sirloin was glorified by our Augustan poets. King proclaimed its dignity, and Fenton extolled it as the fittest fare for "bold Britons." Harping on the old fiction of its knightly worth, the author of the "*Art of Cookery*" says:—

"When pleasures to the eye and palate meet,  
The cook has rendered his great work complete;  
His glory far, like Sir-Loin's knighthood flies,  
Immortal made as Kit-Cat by his pies."

Unaware that the victors of Cressy were habitual consumers of pottage and gallinawfries, Fenton

says in his prologue to Southerne's "Spartan Dame":—

"But the bold Briton ne'er in earnest dines,  
Without substantial haunches and surloins,  
In wit, as well as war, they give us vigour;  
Cressy was lost by kickshaws and soup-meagre."

Greater poets than Fenton and King enlarged the literature of gastronomy in the eighteenth century. Swift sang the leg of mutton, Gay the knuckle of veal, and Goldsmith the haunch of venison. Exhibiting at the same time his delight in good cheer and fine perception of character, Goldsmith also opened the "Retaliation" with the familiar lines:—

"Of old, when Scarron his companions invited,  
Each guest brought his dish, and the feast was united.  
If our landlord supplies us with beef and with fish,  
Let each guest bring himself, and he brings the best dish;  
Our Dean shall be venison, just fresh from the plains;  
Our Burke shall be tongue, with a garnish of brains;  
Our Will shall be wild fowl, of excellent flavour,  
And Dick with his pepper shall heighten the savour;  
Our Cumberland's sweet-bread its place shall obtain,  
And Douglas is pudding substantial and plain;  
Our Garrick's a salad, for in him we see  
Oil, vinegar, sugar, and saltiness agree:  
To make out the dinner, full certain I am  
That Ridge is anchovy, and Reynolds is lamb;  
That Hickey's a capon, and by the same rule,  
Magnanimous Goldsmith a gooseberry fool."

With the aid of a muse, alike clever at turning

couplet and spit, Gay taught cooks how to stew a knuckle of veal in this fashion :—

“Take a knuckle of veal,  
 You may buy it or steal;  
 In a few pieces cut it,  
 In a stewing pan put it;  
 Salt, pepper, and mace,  
     Must season this knuckle;  
 Then what’s joined to a place (*i.e.* celery, *vulgo* salary)  
     With other herbs muckle;  
 That which kill’d King Will (*i.e.* sorrel),  
 And what never stands still (*i.e.* thyme),  
 Some sprigs from that bed  
 Where children are bred, (*i.e.* parsley),  
 Which much will mend, if  
 Both spinach and endive,  
 And lettice and beet  
 With marygold meet.  
 Put no water at all,  
 For it maketh things small,  
 Which lest it should happen,  
 A close cover clap on;  
 Put this pot of wood metal (*i.e.* copper),  
 In a boiling hot kettle,  
 And there let it be  
     (Mark the doctrine I teach)  
 About, let me see,  
     Thrice as long as you preach.  
 So skimming the fat off,  
 Say grace with your hat off,  
 Oh ! then with what rapture  
 Will it fill Dean and Chapter !”

The Dean, for whose amusement and serious



edification Gay threw off this trifle, commended roast mutton in the following strain:—

“ Gently stir and blow the fire,  
Lay the mutton down to roast,  
Dress it quickly, I desire,  
In the dripping put a toast,  
That I hunger may remove,—  
Mutton is the meat I love.

“ On the dresser see it lie,  
Oh ! the charming white and red,  
Finer never met the eye,  
On the sweetest grass it fed ;  
Let the jack go swiftly round,  
Let me have it nicely brown'd.

“ On the table spread the cloth,  
Let the knives be sharp and clean,  
Pickles get and salad both,  
Let them each be fresh and green.  
With small beer, good ale, and wine,  
O ye gods ! how I shall dine !”

The sirloin had attained universal popularity long before our ancestors turned their attention to steaks. The fork had for many years promoted the taste for natural and simple flavours, when epicures discovered that the distinctive sapidity of beef should be sought in thick, lightly broiled slices taken from the juiciest and tenderest parts of the carcase. The precise date of this discovery is unknown ; but it may be assigned to the close of the seventeenth century. Anyhow, steaks were so highly esteemed,

and their eaters so numerous in the days of Queen Anne, that gastronomic connoisseurs formed themselves into clubs that, whilst furthering the inferior ends of good fellowship, had for their chief object the study of beef under the most favourable circumstances. Addison refers to one of these associations in a "Spectator." Samuel Johnson, who belonged to a beef-club in Ivy Lane, lived in times when his countrymen were scarcely more proud of their liberties than of their steaks. Of late years we have grown indifferent to the food which our great grandfathers extolled so passionately. One now-a-days seldom encounters the steak in private houses, or hears its praises in the few taverns which still offer it to their customers. But if we have outgrown our old love of steaks at home, we are still chiefly known to continental gourmands as the inventors and worshippers of the broiled cut. The typical Englishman, who may still be found on the stages of Parisian theatres with a boole-dogue at his heels, may forget to order "ros-bif," but he always takes occasion to declare his loyalty to "bif-teck."

Of all the beef clubs that sprung into existence in the United Kingdom during the last century, none is more famous than the "The Sublime Society of Beef Steaks" which, alike fortunate at its birth and death, was founded by a genial harlequin, and was committed to the grave by an affectionate historian.

Established in 1735, under the roof of Covent Garden Theatre by Henry Rich, whose room had long been the favourite resort of wits and their patrons, the Sublime Society was famous in its infancy. Ay, it was born with historic honours on its head, for memories of Rich's hospitality, and of "good things" uttered at the harlequin's board before the actual enrolment of the brotherhood, were a bright portion of its earlier celebrity. Consisting of only twenty-four members, each of whom might bring a guest on "open days," it had a nicely adjusted constitution, and a staff of officers invested with adequate authority. The "President of the Day" could enforce his orders with the convenient terrors of unwritten and elastic law. There was "the Bishop" to administer the oath to newly elected brothers, and "the Recorder" to preside at the frequent trials, that always closed with a verdict of guilty against beef-eaters accused of criminal propensities. "The Boots," who was every man's butt and butler, was liable to lose anything but his place if he ventured to dally with his beloved viand, when bidden to fetch another bottle from the cellar. The society had of course a badge, a motto, and a uniform. The badge was a gridiron, the motto "Beef and Liberty," the uniform blue coat and buff waistcoat, adorned with brass buttons, bearing the club's gridiron and legend. The club had

also a finger-ring in which was set a gridiron encircled by the club motto. In the earlier days of the Sublime Society, no "Beef Steak" ever appeared in his place at dinner without having the club ring on one of his fingers.

One has only to survey the roll of members to imagine the wit and gaiety of the society's sublimest meetings. Churchill, Dennis Delane, Hogarth, Gabriel Hunt, Dean Price, Judge Welsh, Hippisley, Dr. Anthony Askew, and Theophilus Cibber were some of the brothers who strolled on Saturdays to Covent Garden, in the days when "The Steaks" dined at two o'clock in the old quarters of the harlequin and his friend, the scene-painter, Lambert. Paul Whitehead and Henry Gifford, Dr. Barrowby and Dr. Askew, were amongst the men who may be called the second generation of the Sublime Steaks. At a later date the Prince of Wales and his brothers of York and Sussex proved themselves sincere admirers of the steaming steak, and ate it in company with earls and actors, wits and journalists. The society was jubilant and slightly insolent on drawing within its circle the heir to the throne; but it had more reason to exult over the election of another member, who joined the club three months earlier. Charles Morris, the anacreontic songster, who was perpetually "filling his glass again" from youth to old

age, did more than all the Princes and Peers for the renown of the Steaks. "He was," as Mr. Arnold gratefully observes, "the life and soul of the society." Most of his best songs were sung for the first time at the sublime board, and in days when no man about town liked to confess that he had never heard Captain Morris glorify drunkenness with music and poetry, the Bard of the Beef Steak Club was one of its chief attractions to gentlemen who had no predilection for under-done meat. Anyhow, the Prince of Wales and Captain Morris between them raised the society to the sublimest height of fashion. Henry Brougham was a Beef Steak, whilst he led the Bar and fought his way to honour in the Commons; and he still wore the blue coat and gridiron buttons when he was called to keep the King's conscience. Lord Grantley, Sir Matthew Wood, the Earl of Suffolk, the Duke of Leinster, Cam Hobhouse (Lord Broughton), Sir Francis Burdett, and Dr. Somerville were contemporary Beef Steaks, who used to applaud the brilliant lawyer's special song, "La Pipe de Tabac."

The Beef Steaks at table were so free and frank in their jocular speech, that sensitive members could not always keep their good humour under the hilarious assaults on their self-love. It was a first rule of the society that any member might say what he pleased to another, and that no one was to take



offence at the utterance. But the rule was more easily made than observed. More than a few brothers retired before Brother Stephenson's unscrupulous raillery, and withdrew for ever from a fraternity whose humour involved incessant inflictions of pain. Even the amiable Duke of Sussex nearly broke with the club in his pardonable annoyance at being found guilty (by a Beef Steak jury) of a disgraceful offence. His Royal Highness was walking to "the Steaks" with Brother Hallet, when the latter was relieved of his watch-chain and seals by a street-thief. After dinner the Steaks accused the Prince of being the robber, tried him with due attention to forms, ascertained his guilt, and sentenced him to wear the white sheet and receive a reprimand from the Recorder. The criminal, whose wine and beef had disagreed with him, went through the punishment with a bad grace, and turned sulky. The renewed laughter of Steaks only aggravated his displeasure, and, calling for his carriage at an early hour, he drove off in high dudgeon. On the following morning Mr. Arnold (the historian's father) waited on His Royal Highness in order to assuage the royal anger, and assure him that, in spite of their careful consideration of the damnable evidence, the Steaks held him incapable of stealing a friend's portable property. But before the ambassador could say a word to the purpose,

the good-natured Duke exclaimed, "I know what you are come about. I made a fool of myself last night. You were quite right, and I quite wrong; so I shall come next Saturday and do penance again for my bad temper." The last of the royal brothers to withdraw from the Steaks, the Duke of Sussex, was a member of the Sublime Society so late as 1839.

Between this duke's election and retirement, the club changed its quarters several times. On the destruction (by fire) of its first home, it fed for a few months at the Bedford Coffee House, and then moved to the old Lyceum Theatre in 1809, where it remained till 1830, when it was again "burnt out." Its next home was the Lyceum Tavern, Strand, whence it re-migrated to its old lodging in the Bedford Coffee House, where it tarried till 1838, when its last and stateliest residence was built under the roof of the New Lyceum. Twenty-nine years of existence still remained for the Sublime Society; but they were years of languor and decay. The original gridiron, dug out from the ruins of old Covent Garden, was fixed in the ceiling of the new dining-room, but no one could restore the old spirit of the Society, that never recovered from its loss of Henry Brougham, who withdrew from the club in 1835. Celebrity after celebrity followed Brougham's significant ex-

ample, and though the vacancies were filled up by men of parts and distinction, no new member brought the spirits that could re-animate the failing body.

Steps were taken for its revival; but whilst some of these measures were injudicious, others were only adopted when the patient's case was beyond remedy. It was well to change the day of meeting, but inauspicious Friday was an unfortunate choice of the day for future meetings. To accommodate itself to new fashions, the club postponed its dinner hour from six to seven, and from seven to eight o'clock. In old times the dinner hour (originally two o'clock) had been deferred successively to four, five, and six. The reluctant concession of sherry to members, whose gout forbade them to drink port, was not enough to conciliate failing valetudinarians who were under orders to take nothing but claret.

Noticing several of the causes of its decadence, Mr. Arnold failed to detect the source of the worst troubles under which the Society groaned in its later years. The fact is, the club was slowly dying of dignity. Dukes and Earls lay heavy upon it, great men who seldom appeared at the board, though they continued to pay their annual "subscriptions" and "whips" under a notion that they were doing the moribund brotherhood a service

by "holding on" to the exclusion of younger "blood." Familiarity with Princes had made the senile club disdainful of clever "nobodies;" and preferring great men who had once been brilliant to brilliant men who were only making the first steps to greatness, the Society elected to its vacancies eminent persons out of regard for their names rather than their clubbable faculties. Had it, on entering the New Lyceum, doubled the number of its members, enlarged its menu, reformed its cellar, required half-a-dozen annual attendances from each brother, and recruited itself from the "*boys* about town," the Sublime Society would have flourished to this day. But lacking the courage to take these recuperative measures, it grew weaker and more infirm, until it breathed its last in Mr. Arnold's tender hands, and left its chattels to the auctioneer's hammer.

The honour of belonging to the Sublime Steaks was costly. In the palmiest days of the club the entrance fee of each new member was £26 5s., a charge reduced to £10 10s. in 1849. The "whips" for current expenses were on the average equal to an annual subscription of £10 from each brother. At the same time a member paid five shillings for every dinner of which he partook, and half-a-guinea for his friend's entertainment. The price paid to

the butcher for steaks was on the average half-a-crown a pound.

Notwithstanding the growing distaste for the broiled slice, Steak Clubs are still numerous in London and the provinces. Of those which still meet in the Covent Garden and Strand quarter, none is more vigorous and famous than "Our Club," at whose board Dickens (as a visitor) ate his steak, and Thackeray (as a member) used to sing the "Mahogany Tree" and "Little Billee." It is true that since Douglas Jerrold founded "Our Club," on the understanding that the fare should consist of fish, steaks, marrow-bones, and toasted cheese, the menu has been enlarged with proper consideration for squeamish appetites and weak stomachs. But though the weekly banquet at Clunn's comprises joints and made dishes, it still remains a steak feast for those who care to dine heartily on broiled steaks, plain or shallotted. By the way, Dr. Diamond, an original member of "Our Club," is the gastronomer who discovered that the distinguishing virtues of marrow on toast are delicately sustained and emphasized by a few drops of the best anchovy sauce.

Alexandre Dumas was mistaken in supposing that the beef-steak was unknown in Paris before Waterloo. So early as 1814, Monsieur Beauvilliers, in "L'Art du Cuisinier," extolled the English "rome-



steck" in terms which prove that Parisian epicures were already familiar with the excellences of the viand. It follows that the novelist was not historically justified in applauding the French of 1815 for the generous superiority to prejudice and passion, which distinguished their prompt acceptance of a culinary lesson from their insolent conquerors. Dumas, however, was right in observing that, after trying steaks taken from the several choice parts of the ox, his countrymen preferred the "bifteck d'aloyau" to the "romesteck." Admitting that we may do well in preferring the rump-cuts of our prime animals, he insists that in France, where oxen are usually worked on the farm before they are fatted for the table, and seldom pass to the butcher till labour has hardened their muscle, the epicure exercises a wise discretion in taking his "biftecks" from the juiciest part of the loin, although he thus obtains the maximum of tenderness at a considerable sacrifice of flavour. The English idler in Paris would not so often express surprise at the exquisite tenderness of his "bifteck," and refer disparagingly to the beef of his native land, if he knew the anatomical and gastronomic differences of the Parisian "filet d'aloyau" and the London rump-steak.

Of the intimate relations established by gastronomy between steaks and oysters, there is no need to speak. If beef enables us to appreciate liberty,

it is to the "native" that we are indebted for our perception of some of the finer excellences of beef. So long as the "rump" survives, the "dozen" will ever be found at its side. But ere we pass from beef to less majestic delicacies, let us render homage to beef-steak pudding, than which no goodlier fare can be found for a strong hungry man on a cold day. Rising from his pudding at the "Cheshire Cheese," such a feaster is at a loss to say whether he should be most grateful for the tender steak, savoury oyster, seductive kidney, rich gravy, ardent pepper, or delicate paste. Steak-pie is one of those culinary blunders for which even charity has no excuse. Hot, it is a greasy mistake ; cold, it is an outrage and a disaster. The abominable thing would be less afflicting to the temper and the digestion, were it not for the appetizing look of its poisonous crust.

## CHAPTER III.

## PIE AND PIE-TART.

*"Tartlettes.*—Take veal goode, and grynde it smale. Take harde egron ysode, and ygrond, and do thereto with prunes hoole, dates icorved, pynes, and raisons corans, hool spices, and powder, sugar, salt, and make a litell coffyn, and do this fare thereinne, and bake it, and serve it forthe."—THE FORME OF CURY,

"Why, little Jack, be sure would eat  
His Christmas pye in rhyme;  
And said, Jack Horner in the corner  
Eats good Christmas pye,  
And with his thumb pulls out the plumb,  
And said, good boy am I."

HISTORY OF JACK HORNER.

"Let never fresh machines your pastry try,  
Unless grandees or magistrates are by,  
Then you may put a dwarf into a pye,  
Or if you fright an alderman and mayor,  
Within a pasty lodge a living hare:  
Then midst their gravest furs shall mirth arise,  
And all the Guild pursue with joyful cries."

KING'S "ART OF COOKERY."

THE late Duke of Cambridge's favourite dinner was roast pig and apple dumpling. The late Lord Dudley was never satisfied with a banquet which afforded no apple-pie. "God bless my soul, no apple-pie!" he muttered repeatedly, with mingled surprise and discontent, as he looked in vain for his favourite fruit-dish at Prince Esterhazy's sump-

tuously provided table. Mr. Hayward records that his lordship "insisted on calling it apple-pie, contending that the term 'tart' only applied to open pastry."

Old friendships have been broken and fortunes lost by contention about the precise and distinctive meanings of "pie" and "tart." Like Lord Dudley, Charley Silkstone, whilom the most supercilious of dandies about town, stubbornly refused to call apple-pie a tart.

"Shall I send you some apple-tart?" inquired Charley's great Aunt Martha, the severe and frigid widow of Sir Andrew Curtis, gin-distiller.

"Thank you, Lady Curtis, I will take some apple-pie," returned Charley.

"Fruit pies *are* tarts," great-aunt Curtis urged authoritatively.

"What you call apple-tart is always called apple-pie in 'society,'" was the rejoinder.

Charley had his apple-pie, but he missed great-aunt Martha's farms in Surrey, which, in consequence of the dispute, were left to another great-nephew, who had the prudence to agree with the imperious lady on the important question.

Pie, the abbreviation of *pâtisserie*, together with all the cognate terms, such as paste, pastry, *pâté*, patty, is a derivative of the Latin *pistum*, the past participle of *pinsere*, "to beat together." Junius,

with his Greek *παστος*, and Skinner, with his Latin *pastus*, are out of the discussion. Whether they be earthy or farinaceous, materials beaten, kneaded, or otherwise worked into an adhesive mass are "paste." And pastry is the generic term for *all* culinary preparations that are served on layers or in cases, whether opened or closed, of farinaceous paste. Pie is nothing but an abbreviation of this generic term. All tarts are pies, but all pies are not tarts.

What in strict language is tart? By what feature is "tart" distinguishable from other kinds of pies? The answer may not be sought in its ingredients, though some of our culinary writers countenance the erroneous notion that tarts are indebted for their distinctive appellation to the acidulous quality of the materials served on their pastry. The difference is one of manner, instead of matter. Pies may be of flesh or fish, and yet be tarts. They may be of fruit, and yet be only pies. The etymological and gastronomic distinctions of "pie" and "tart" consist altogether in the fashion of the paste. The word "tart," *tarte* in the French, comes to us from the Latin *torta*, the participle of *torquere*, to twist. Tart, the thing, is paste twisted into fantastic shapes. Lord Lytton spoke correctly of the "tarts and confectionery, *tortured* into a thousand fantastic shapes," that appeared in the third



course of Glaucus's Pompeian supper. Whatever the compound offered *on* the crust, a piece of *uncovered* plain pastry, that has undergone no *torturing* touches at the cook's hands, is an "open pie." A pie, whether closed or open, whether its contents be meat, or fruit, or custard, may be called "tart" when any portion of its paste has been twisted or manipulated fancifully by the maker.

The vessel, or dish of paste, *i.e.*, the primitive patty-pan, fashioned to receive the ingredients of a pasty, was called in the Old English kitchen a "trap." When *covered* with a lid of paste, so as to be the case or shell of a closed pie, it was called a coffin. In such traps, open, grated, or confined, our cooks of olden time put flesh, fish, fruit, vegetables, and the various compounds of milk and eggs, now-a-days called *custard*. Any compound kept in store ready to be put into such traps was termed "tartee." In the "Forme of Cury" may be found receipts for tartees of flesh, fish, herbs, apples, and dry fruit. The same old work gives us the word "tartelette," as a term for any pie of moderate size and tortured pastry. A tortured pie, big enough to feed half-a-dozen persons, was sometimes styled a "tartlette" by Richard the Second's cooks, who also made very minute tartlets—no bigger than our smallest mince pies—that were often served swimming in potage.

Another Old English term for pie was "crustard," corrupted in the course of time to custard. On being baked so that it had the hardness of ice or the shell of a fish, farinaceous paste was at an early period of our cuisine called crust, from the Latin *crusta*. In mediæval England pies of every kind might be called crustards; but in our Elizabethan age the term seems to have been confined to fruit-pies and milk-pudding pies. At that time apple-pies were commonly called "custards," and apples good for use in pies—*i.e.*, what are now-a-days termed "good cooking-apples"—were sold as custard (or costard) apples, and then as "costards." The fruit having been so designated, the dealers in cooking apples were called *costard* (or *coster*) mongers. "Coddling" was another term produced by the same period to designate a good cooking-apple. "To coddle" is "to intenerate by the heat of gently boiling water;" and the apple which could be thus cosseted and coddled into tenderness was styled "a codling." The term was occasionally applied to other vegetables which yielded readily to the influence of the pot. For instance, peas that softened readily in hot water were "codling peas." Mr. Gifford was of the questionable opinion that Ford's "hot codlings" in "The Sun's Darling" were hot peas.

Robert May gives several receipts for cooking

quodlings, *alias* codlings. He served them in pies, *fool*-cream, and also in small earthen or metal dishes (patty-pans) without paste. "Take green quodlings and quodle them," he says in a direction for a pie, "peel them and put them again into the same water, cover them close, and let them *simper* on embers till they be very green, then take them up and let them drain, pick out their noses, and leave on the stalks, then put them in a pye, and put to them fine sugar, whole cinnamon, slic't ginger, a little musk and rose water, close them up with a tight cover, and as soon as it boils up in the oven, draw it and ice it with rose-water, butter, and sugar. Or you may preserve them and bake them in a dish, with paste, tart, or patty-pan."

The same chef's receipt for codling cream is also noteworthy. "Codle forty fair codlings green and tender, then peel them and core them, and beat them, strain them with a quarte of cream, and mix them well together in a dish with fine sugar, sack, musk, and rose-water. This you may do with any fruit you please." Fruit thus boiled, *pressed* through a sieve or colander, and mixed with cream or new milk, was called *fruit foulé*, speedily corrupted into "fruit fool." Gooseberry cream, or fool, still retains the foolish designation.

Pear-pie is seldom seen now-a-days on the English table; but no fruit-dish was more highly esteemed

by our ancestors than a tart of warden-pears, *i.e.*, the warden-pie celebrated in a well-known song by a composer of the present century. "Bake your wardens or pears in an oven," says the author of "The Court and Kitchen of Elizabeth Cromwell" (1664), "with a little water and good quantity of sugar, let your pot be covered with a piece of dough, let them not be fully baked by a quarter of an hour; when they are cold make a high coffin, and put them in whole, adding to them some cloves, whole cinnamon, sugar, with some liquor they were boiled in, so bake it." Another receipt for a warden-dish appears in an earlier work, to which the compiler of "The Court and Kitchen" was largely indebted. "You must," says the author of "A Cookery Book" (1650), "bake your wardens first in a *pye*, and then take all the wardens and cut them in foure quarters, and coare them, and put them in a *tart pinched*, with your sugar, cinamon and ginger, and set them in an oven, and put no cover on them; but you must cut a cover, and lay on the *tart* when it is baked, and butter the *tart* and cover too, and endore it with sugar." This receipt is interesting as testimony that so late as the seventeenth century our more exact writers on cookery drew the right distinction between "pie" and "tart," applying the latter term only to "pie" which had been curiously handled. Pastry became "tart" on being

*pinched* with the fingers, and the entire piece of pinched pastry was *the tart* on which the fruit was laid. The cover, a *plain* lid of pie, was no part of the fantastically-shaped paste, to which alone the term “tart” was strictly applicable.”

This same Book of Cookery for 1650 gives another receipt, in which *tart* is used in the same carefully limited sense. “To make a *tart* of *custards*—You must take halfe a hundreth of *custards*, and pare them, and cut them, and as soon as you have cut them, put them in a pot, and put in two or three pound of sugar, and a pint of water, and a little rose-water, and stirre from the time you put them in, until the time you take them out again; or else you may also put it in a dish, and when your tart is made, put it in the oven, and when it is baked endore it with butter, and throw sugar on the top, and then put on your sauce, and set comfits on the top, and so serve it.” To the writer of these directions the fruit and tart were separate things. Having been coddled in the pot, the “custards” were laid upon the baked tart-paste, which was forthwith glazed and garnished. “A tart of custards” signified a mess of “coddled custards served on tart,” or twisted pastry. The same habit of discriminating between the component parts of an elaborate pie, *i.e.*, between the tart and the material served with it, appears in



“The Good Huswives Handmaid,” (1595), “The Widdowe’s Treasure,” (1595), and “The Good Huswife’s Jewell,” (1595-7), from which the compiler of 1650 took the greater part of his materials for “A Cookery Book.” By the way, one of the receipts in the “Huswife’s Jewell” is for “a tart that is a courage to a man or woman.” In this case, the preparation served on *tart* was a boiled and strained mess of quinces, vegetables, roots, yolks of eggs and brains of sparrows, highly qualified with wine and spices.

Whilst pies were termed crustards or custards, and milk-puddings of every variety were served in plain or tart pastry, a common preparation of milk and eggs gradually acquired its now distinctive name from the crust in which it was generally brought to table. It is long since apple-pie was usually termed a “tart of custards.” Even in our markets the fruit from which our costermongers derive their designation is rarely called a costard. But whether they be baked or boiled, the grateful combinations of milk and eggs are still termed *custard* from the baked paste, which in olden time used to embed and cover them.

Humble-pie, a pasty to which we are indebted for several familiar and pungent sayings, was largely eaten at the old English table by gourmands of every grade, and at the Elizabethan table by per-

sons whose quality did not entitle them to the best fare.

The word “umbles” (from the Latin *umbilicus*) has been long used to designate the entrails and other internal parts of the deer. Webster gives this limited meaning of the term, and Pegge used the word in the same restricted sense. In our mediæval time, however, the abdominal viscera of swine, sheep and oxen were called “umbles.” Pegge’s “Ancient Cookery” (No. 3) contains a receipt for humble-stew, which begins thus: “Take nombuls of a calf, or of a swyne, or of a shepe.” The term even comprehended the paunches of the larger fishes. “Nombuls of purpoys” were cooked like those of swyne in the fourteenth century, and the compilers of “The Forme of Cury” give directions how “to make noumbles for Lent,” out of the chopt “panches of pykes, of congers, and of great cod lyng.” Our feudal ancestors were great consumers of umbles, serving them in half-a-dozen different ways and spelling the name in as many various fashions. They had soups, hashes, stews, and pasties of humbles. Tripe, at present seldom seen in the houses of the rich, though still acceptable to the populace, was one of the humble-messes in which the old English delighted. The same may be said of the liver-and-bacon, *i.e.*, pig’s fry, beloved by Lord Chancellor Eldon.

In the days of the Plantagenets, humbles of all kinds were rated as dainty fare. But the Tudor cooks and epicures regarded them with qualified disdain, as meat fit for the inferior boards of noble banquets, but inappropriate to the highest tables. Humbles having thus fallen into disesteem, it became the fashion to serve them in pies and hashes to sitters beneath the salt, whilst the occupants of the higher seats were regaled with slices from the prime joints. The usage gave rise to several phrases. To eat humble-pie was to sit at the lower table, and, in the case of an arrogant guest, to experience humiliation. Children of the riper ages were often threatened with "humble-pie," as a punishment for misbehaviour; that is to say, they were menaced with degradation from their places above the salt at the family table. Under the rule of severe parents, a young lady of marriageable years would for some venial offence—such as malapertness to mamma, or coquetry with an ineligible suitor—lose her right to sit with her brothers and sisters, and be required for a month at a time to take her place at meals with the superior dependents of the household. Whilst thus in disgrace, she was said to be eating humble-pie. On amending her ways, and showing fit penitence, she was restored to the company and joints of the higher board. Contumacious boys, too old to be whipped

and put in the corner, were in like manner reduced to proper submissiveness with ignominious diet at the bottom of the table.

Before it thus took rank with the birch and the foolscap as an instrument of domestic punishment, humble-pie had lost much of its original merit. John Murrell taught the readers of his "New Cookery Book" (1630) how, in the absence of "right humbles," to make humble-pies of sheeps-head and the minced "pluck." Henceforth the common pasty of the lower table seldom contained anything better than livers and hearts of oxen. More often than not, its thick, heavy crust covered an omnium-gatherum of scraps and bones and other refuse of the previous week's dinners, recooked with potatoes and slices of pumpkin. In fact, it became that gastronomic abomination which the wit of a more recent age christened "The Refuge of the Destitute."

On his return from Italy, Thomas Coryate commended frogs as delicate fare to the notice of his fellow-countrymen; and the suggestion was ere long fruitful of the frog-pies which the epicures of Charles the First's London ate with infinite gust. In his directions for cooking "frogs in the Italian fashion," Robert May orders that their thighs should be dressed with, and served in, pastry, together with the flesh of eels and fruit. "Season

them both with pepper, nutmeg, and ginger," says the chef, "lay butter on your paste, and lay a rank of frog, and a rank of eel, some currants, gooseberries or grapes, raisins, pine-apple seeds, juyce of orange, sugar, and butter : this do three times, close up your dish, and being baked, ice it," *i.e.*, with sugar. Frog-pie, thus compounded, was often seen at the best London tables, any time between James the First's later years and Charles the Second's death. Just as George the Third's commonalty scorned the French for living chiefly on frogs, the "populace" of England in the seventeenth century imagined that frogs were the principal food of the fantastic and vicious Italians.

Readers of "The Sentimental Journey" do not need to be reminded that, in consideration of their amphibious nature, the church rated frogs as a species of fish, and allowed the faithful to eat them during Lent, a fact that accounts for the esteem in which their weak and flavourless flesh was held by gastronomers in Catholic countries. Poor viand though it was, frog-flesh was better than none. The sea-fowl, called in France "macreuse," was also allowed for Lenten diet to pious gourmands who relished the bird of rank fishy taste on meagre days, but never touched it when they might eat better meat. The large circular macreuse pies, served at the table of Louis XIV. in seasons of



fasting, sometimes measured two feet in diameter.

Another pie, highly fashionable in Stuart England, was the surprise-pie, which was no sooner opened than one or more living creatures issued from the breach in the crust. A pie of this kind might contain half-a-dozen live frogs, that on leaping from the crust to the table-cloth, and from the cloth to a lady's plate or lap, would throw her into hysterics. Or it might with equal propriety hide a score live sparrows that, on escaping from the pie-dish, would fly to the candles and put a large supper-party in darkness. Robert May served a surprise-pie of frogs, and another of birds, in the Twelfth Night trophy mentioned in a former chapter of this work. To such a bird-pie, served at Charles the First's table, when these "surprises" were not more absurd than novel, we are indebted for the rhymes :

"Sing a song of sixpence !  
Sing it to the sky !  
Four and-twenty black-birds baked in pie,  
When the pie was opened,  
The birds began to sing,  
Wasn't this a pretty sight to set before the king."

Pies of live birds and frogs having become matters of course to modish revellers, other creatures were employed to sustain the surprising character of surprise pastry. Toy-terriers, squirrels, hares,

foxes, and mannikin pages were in turn used for the astonishment of people who, on the look-out for a live pie of some kind, could be startled only by the apparition of an unexpected animal. When a score different creatures had been served in surprise pies to Charles the First, and he was weary of surprises that were no longer astonishing, his humour was pleasantly tickled by the unlooked-for appearance of the dwarf, Jeffrey Hudson, who had been placed under crust on a table spread for the entertainment of royalty at Burleigh-on-the-Hill. The sovereign had been trapped into asking for a piece of the unusually large game-pie, when, on the removal of the cover of paste, the dwarf, armed with sword and buckler, sprang from the "coffin," and ran down the table to his liege lord and Henrietta Maria. In the "Anecdotes of Painting," Horace Walpole says that this incident occurred some time about 1630, whilst their Majesties were the guests of the Duke and Duchess of Buckingham.

It would have fared ill with any officious servitor who had ventured to arrest the imp as he danced down the table, clearing in successive leaps the dishes in his way; for the diminutive page had already earned a reputation for dare-devil pugnacity. Nettled by the affront, he would have seized the first opportunity to avenge it with the sword that had been put into his hands for sportive

use. A more fearless and impetuous fellow never lived than this pie-famous page, who, on attaining his majority and the fullness of his small stature, became as conspicuous in arms as Richard Gibson (Charles the First's mannikin and *miniature*-painter) was in arts. A captain in the Royal Army, he distinguished himself in service against the rebels of the Long Parliament, and after retiring to France in the suite of Henrietta Maria, exhibited his martial prowess by fighting a duel on horseback with Mr. Crofts, and killing him at the first shot. Always carrying pistols, which he used with equal promptitude and dexterity, Jeffrey never shirked the kind of combat in which his minuteness gave him the advantage over men of large size. Too small to be hit, he was quite big enough to kill. When Pope assumed pocket fire-arms in self-defence, observing that with pistols the pigmy was a match for the giant, he is supposed to have alluded to little Hudson; who, by the way, eventually died of gaol fever in the Gate-House, where he had been taken on suspicion of complicity in the Popish plot.

Some of the pasties set before English epicures in the seventeenth century were so loaded with fat and larded meat, that it gives one a sick headache to read the orders for their composition. Robert May served a generation that delighted in marrow-pies and bacon-tarts. In cold seasons Giles Rose often

sent to Charles the Second's board a pasty of Westphalia Gammon, from which the grossest feeders of our time would turn with disgust. The gammon was boiled, minced, sugared, larded, and seasoned with cinnamon, pepper, and citron before it was cased in dough, and committed to the oven. On being taken from the oven, it was drenched with lemon-juice, covered with sugar, and served hot. A choicer compound for epicures, disposed to heart-burn and bilious headache, was the London pie, a receipt for which may be found in the "*Archimagirus Anglo-Gallicus*," the cookery-book attached by its audacious compiler to the fame of Sir Theodore Mayerne, the physician, who was no more accountable for the treatise than Abernethy was for the nasty seed-biscuit which simple people still consume to their injury, under the impression that it was invented by the great surgeon for the special comfort of dyspeptic sufferers.

"Take eight marrow-bones," says the author of "*Archimagirus Anglo-Gallicus*," "eighteen sparrows, one pound of potatoes, a quarter of a pound of eringoes, two ounces of lettuce-stalks, forty chesnuts, a peck of oysters, a quarter of a pound of preserved citron, three artichokes, twelve eggs, two sliced lemons, a handful of pickled barberries, a quarter of an ounce of whole pepper, half an ounce of sliced nutmeg, half an ounce of whole

cloves, half an ounce of mace, and a quarter of a pound of currants. Liquor, when it is baked, with white wine, butter, and sugar." Mr. Robert Chambers asserts that a pie made in accordance with this receipt was eaten not long since with lively satisfaction by a party of gastronomers. The reader probably will not regret that he had no finger in the mess.

Whilst the French were famous for the enormity of their Lenten *macreuse*-pies, the English achieved celebrity by making turkey-pies of prodigious circumference and weight. Dr. Lister states that in the diocese of Durham a hundred squab turkeys were put into a single pie for the regalement of the bishop's clerical visitors. Though a mere patty by the side of one of these Durham pasties, the pie made at Howick in 1770 for the regalement of Sir Henry Grey's London friends was a weighty matter. Mrs. Dorothy Patterson, the Howick housekeeper, used two bushels of flour and twenty pounds of butter in the manufacture of its crust, which contained four geese, two turkeys, two rabbits, four wild ducks, two woodcocks, six snipes, and four partridges, two neats' tongues, two curlews, six blackbirds, and six pigeons. Put in the scales, this monstrous pasty raised the weight of twelve stones. At Sir Henry Grey's table it was served on a carriage fitted with



four wheels, so that it was easily moved to and fro by its admiring consumers.

But no pie still served at the English table has stronger claims than the minced or shred pie to the student's respectful consideration. Pasties of superior flavour and delicacy rise to the epicure's imagination at the sound of the word "pie," but he will search in vain for a more ancient or widely-famous crustard. Not more rich in multifarious ingredients than in historic associations, it proclaims the origin of our Old English cuisine, and commemorates the cookery which prevailed in England from the Roman occupation to the decay of feudalism. Made on Apician principles, of many materials and with an unsparing use of the knife, it was served at British and Saxon tables of pre-Norman date, and after witnessing the culinary changes of a thousand years, it remains a dainty for men of all estates, and a symbol of festivity even to the valetudinarians who dare not eat it. The theme of poets who sung before the invention of printing, it also elicited countless pleasantries from the Elizabethan wits, and became a subject of controversy to the pulpiteers and fanatics of the seventeenth century. The *Christmas Pie* of Little Jack Horner, was made in prodigious quantities for the festal requirements of a season when, in default of fresh fruit from the garden and orchard, the lovers of good cheer squandered their

money on preserved fruits, and gratefully accepted the raisin as a substitute for the grape. But it is a mistake to suppose that it was seen only at Christmas. Easter holiday-makers preferred the cheesecake and custard of milk and eggs to the preparation of dried fruit, on which they had often feasted to satiety during the previous months. And as soon as the fruits of the garden and orchard came in season no time was lost in bringing them to table, for whilst prudence counselled that such perishable blessings should be enjoyed when they could be obtained, the heat created a universal appetite for cooling and acidulous food. But the pie, which took one of its names from the season when no other fruit-pie could be had, was never quite *out of season*. Adored and devoured immoderately in the Winter, it was eaten thankfully in Spring and Autumn, and not altogether neglected in the dog-days.

Nor are there sufficient grounds for the common opinion that the seventeenth century Puritans abhorred mince-pie as a thing revered superstitiously, if not worshipped idolatrously, by the malignant multitude. Some few of the more ignorant people unquestionably regarded it with sentiments of religious enthusiasm; and Anabaptists of the wildest and fiercest kind occasionally denounced the pie as a Pagan contrivance for bringing

souls to perdition. But it would be unjust to attribute the extravagances of a score fanatics to the general body of the Puritans who, disapproving of Christmas revelries, refrained from eating rich fare at a season which they devoted to religious exercises and serious meditation. Samuel Butler admits that the Puritans, whom he covered with ridicule, were not more ready to eat mince-pie than to speak hard words of other Christmas delicacies,

“ Rather than fail they will decry  
That which they love most tenderly;  
Quarrel with minc'd pies, and disparage  
Their best and dearest friend, plum-porridge,  
Fat pig and goose itself oppose,  
And blaspheme custard through the nose.”

The political satirist may be excused for omitting to remark that these opponents of pig and goose only denounced the custom of feasting greedily on such dainties in the Christmas week, and had enough gastronomic sensibility to relish “pie” at less sacred seasons. Butler’s biographer, however, had the fairness to exhibit this side of Puritan opinion with regard to luxuries of the table. “We,” says Samuel Johnson, “have never been witnesses of animosities excited by the use of mince-pies and plum-porridge, nor seen with what abhorrence those who could eat them at all other times of the year would shrink from them at Christmas.”

The author of "Hudibras" was not the only Royalist wit to insist that, in censuring what they deemed an abuse of pie, the Puritans quarrelled with pie itself. A chapter, if not a volume, could be made of scraps of merry writing, that thus misstate the attitude and object of the "sour fanatics" in a controversy which ended in their defeat. The war about plums only confirmed the populace in its seasonable love of them, and gave an almost sacred significance to the dried fruit and spices which had been adopted as chief ingredients of Christmas fare, merely because no better materials for sweet food could be bought in mid-winter. In the reaction against Puritanism, the soup abhorred by the saints was extolled by the sinners above all other pottages; and persons with no sincere liking for "pie" ate it greedily, from a sense of politico-religious duty, at the season in which they had been sanctimoniously admonished to abstain from it. Ay, more, in their contempt for Puritanism, the people, gradually ceasing to eat plum-food at other festivals, declared that the slandered pie should be deemed strictly seasonable at no time but Christmas.

At present the national pie is seldom seen at the best tables, save in the form of small covered tartlets; but in the seventeenth century it was usually served in large rectangular crustards. The Christ-

mas pie of the Restoration cuisine, rarely weighing less than fourteen pounds, often exceeded several stones in weight. Selden gravely declared that its coffin was made in imitation of the infant Saviour's cratch or manger. When the learned and seldom incautious antiquary could speak thus wildly of the oldest form of pie-trap, which had been used from the earliest days of our mediæval cookery for pies of every size and variety, the multitude were assured by more imaginative scribes that the rich meat lying in the cratch was symbolical of the Saviour's nature.

It should also be observed that, though made on Apician principles and with nice observance of the process from which it derives its name, modern mince-meat differs materially from the "mince" of olden time. Consisting chiefly of flesh, the mediæval shred pasty was a meat-pie with just enough dried fruits to give the flesh a fruity flavour. The fruits, the costliest of its materials, were quite subordinate ingredients of the compound, that sometimes contained a score of different kinds of flesh. By degrees the proportion of fruit was increased, in compliance with a growing taste for raisins and citron-peel, and also from the hospitable reluctance of entertainers to exhibit parsimony in the use of such expensive dainties. The developments of British commerce, however, had brought the dried



fruits and spices of Southern Europe to the tables of our prosperous commonalty, if not of our poorer folk, long before the foreign ingredients of the national pie were used profusely even in the kitchens of the wealthy. Raisins of the sun and currants from the Levant were not exhibited in the window of every village grocer's shop in the seventeenth, or even in the eighteenth century. Bought at prices that would scandalize housekeepers of the present time, they were kept under lock and key, and brought out at festal times with proper regard for their costliness. In "weighing out" such luxuries on the approach of Christmas, the thrifty dame of a Caroline household kept a sharp eye on the beam of her store-room scales. What the "receipt" demanded she gave honestly and precisely. But she never threw in an extra plum or drachm of peel. A century later such care was needless. Dried fruits were cheaper, and as they fell in price, they were used more lavishly in festive messes. The rapid growth of our commerce was reflected in our pie-pans, and proclaimed by every Christmas pudding. It had worked a revolution in our oldest national dish. What was once only its costly flavour had become its chief and cheap substance, and the fleshly ingredients which in old time afforded nine-tenths of its bulk had become the subordinate elements of Christmas pie. Modern

taste reduced still further the fleshly constituents of the revolutionized pie. For awhile it authorized the use of mutton as a material for qualifying the excessive richness of the fruits. Ere long the soft neat's tongue was substituted for mutton. At present, finely chopt suet is the only animal substance used in the mince-meat of our best housekeepers, and this last survivor of all the flesh, that once dwelt in Christmas pie, is retained as a whimsical additament and a graceful reference to the history of the compound, rather than as a fundamental ingredient.

But whilst our ancestors of the seventeenth century, and earlier half of the following age, were enriching the mince-pie with larger and larger quantities of fruit and candied rind to the ultimate exclusion of its ancient *substance*, they continued to season their ordinary meat-pies after the fashion of their forefathers, with slight sprinklings of dried plums and currants. The meat-pies that made "kit-cat famous" were thus sweetened to the taste of gourmands, who resembled the Old English in liking to puzzle their palates with combinations of incongruous flavours. The same was the case with the mutton-pies that brought honour and wealth to Ben Tyrrell at Oxford. The gastronomic condition, which enabled our forefathers to relish such a culinary paradox as fruitified flesh, is not yet extinct

from our people. Polite feeders are still sometimes seen taking red currant jelly with roast mutton and hare. The taste for plum-sauce—a barbarous contrivance for spoiling fine natural flavours—still survives amongst the commonalty of our provinces, who have been taught to think it a proper seasoning for meat. It has, however, entirely disappeared from Norfolk since Rush the murderer ordered pig and plum-sauce for his last dinner.

To pass from mince-pie—the ancientest of all still eaten pies—to the pies of Perigord and Strasbourg, is to withdraw the vision from a majestic oak and survey the flowers of yesterday. Much might be said in behalf of each of these foreign *pâtés*. But both are open to objection. The pie of Strasbourg has a noble flavour and distinctive richness, but whilst he requires an unusually strong stomach to endure the one, the epicure must have an unfeeling heart to enjoy the other quality. Whatever its excellences, the delicacy which provokes bilious head-ache cannot on the whole be more productive of happiness than of misery. The dainty, which results from the torture of helpless creatures, is no choice fare for the gentle guest who knows the secret of its manufacture. Epicures are strangely inconsistent, or they would not shudder at the thought of intenerating pigs with the lash, and a moment later smile at the agonies of the Strasbourg geese.

The pie of Perigord is less abhorrent to the tender heart, but even more perilous to the failing stomach. Nature should either have made truffles less delicious, or have endowed all men with the power to digest them. There are statisticians who insist that, when he died in the eighteenth century, Courtois, the inventor of the Perigord pie, had killed more men than were subsequently destroyed in the Great Napoleon's battles. Perhaps the men of numbers overstate the case. But Napoleon survived his power of killing on a grand scale. It ceased at his fall. The destructiveness of a pie-maker does not necessarily end with his death. Courtois bequeathed his *secrets* to his daughter, Madeleine Pressac.

## CHAPTER IV.

## POULTRY.

“Our tame foule are such (for the most part) as are common both to us and to other countries, as cocks, hens, geese, ducks, peacocks of Inde, pigeons.”—WILLIAM HARRISON’S “INTRODUCTION TO HOLINSHED’S CHRONICLES.”

“Beefe, mutton and porke, shred pies of the best,  
Pig, veale, goose and capon and turkie well drest,  
Chese, apples and nuts, jolie carols to heare,  
And then in the countrie, is counted good cheare.”

TUSSERS “FIVE HUNDRED POINTS OF HUSBANDRY.”

“We have poulterer’s ware for your sweet bloods, as dove, chicken, duck, teal, woodcock and so forth.”—DEKKER’S “HONEST WHORE.”

THE horse, as we were all taught in early childhood, is a noble animal. It is not fowl. But considerations justify the historian of food in mentioning its flesh in a chapter on poultry. Cooks and higglers take larger views of some subjects than compilers of dictionaries. Webster defines poultry as “domestic fowls which are propagated and fed for the table, and for their eggs and feathers.” Richardson, more severely etymological, describes poultry as “the *young* of birds usually called domestic fowls.” Disregarding the dictionaries, our cooks have long ranked rabbits with poultry; and there are dealers in good cheer who insist that



butter and Neuchâtel cheese are poultry. The elastic term is even made to cover some of the hereditary enemies of the fowl-yard. The foxes, systematically imported from Antwerp to this country for purposes of sport, are cleared through the Harwich custom-house under the felicitous designation of poultry.

Custom enables us to relish any diet, however offensive to epicurean principles. Whilst the Scotchman devours haggis with gust, and smacks his lips over oatmeal porridge, the Suffolk farmer believes that his abominable dumpling, greased with dripping, is a dainty. There is no aliment so repulsive to the imagination or taste, that man cannot be trained to enjoy it. His teeth have watered over the flesh of apes, serpents, and vermin. Nothing is sweeter to a gipsy's tooth than a fine hedge-hog baked in clay. There are times when even civilized man will consent to stay his hunger by feeding on his own species. Indeed, with the jocularly which often conveys wholesome truths, Sydney Smith once spoke of "cold curate" as an exquisite delicacy, under certain conditions. Charles the Fifth's chronicler, Don Anthony of Guevara, was amazed and slightly disgusted when he saw German epicures, in the highest society, eating roast sirloin of horse, cat in jelly, lizards served in frumenty, and frogs fried in batter. A century later, frogs, as we

have seen, were regularly cooked for the politest tables of England, France, and Italy. Lizards, though highly acceptable to the Romans, do not appear to have been ever generally eaten in this country. Nor have our gastronomers distinguished themselves as eaters of the cat. The *noble lord* who in 1791 bribed a London savage to eat a live cat, can have had no creditable purpose in the outrage which justified Warner in reflecting upon him as a disgrace of his order. As Selden remarked of John de Camey's behaviour in selling his wife to William Paynel, this *noble lord's* conduct must be adjudged a "singular portent," that throws no sure light on the propensities of our forefathers.

The horse, however, has been often eaten with thankfulness by Englishmen, either in default of more usual fare or from gastronomic curiosity; and in so doing they had the sanction of mediæval and ancient gastronomers, and also of modern peoples that can scarcely be stigmatized as barbarous. In Elizabeth's reign, General Doisell, commanding the French army in Scotland, set *powdered* horse before the English captains at a ceremonial banquet. Doubtless the English gentlemen would have preferred the viand "fresh;" but salted war-horse was the only flesh which their host had at hand. In quite recent times, serious attempts have been made in London and Paris to give horse-flesh a permanent

place amongst viands for the table. M. de Sainte-Hilaire's "Agapes de Cheval" were in the novelist's mind when he wrote for his "Grand Dictionnaire de Cuisine," "il est probable que le noble animal que l'homme associe à sa gloire militaire, ne lui servira d'aliment que dans les circonstances exceptionnelles de blocus et de famine." Scarcely was the ink dry with which Dumas penned these words, when the Prussians were marching on Paris to associate horse-flesh with military disaster, and to raise the prime joints of young pony to fabulous prices in the markets of the beleaguered capital.

Whilst the *savans* of Paris discussed the gastro-nomic merits of horse-flesh, Mr. Bicknell was urging the London poor to eat the same meat. Plying his facile pen in the cause of hippophagy, Mr. Bicknell also endeavoured to lure his numerous friends to adopt his opinions by entertaining them with horse, cooked in various ways. Having demonstrated the culinary virtues of the noble animal, he turned his attention to the patient ass. "If you have nothing better to do," he wrote to the author of this work, shortly after the Langham Hotel Horse Banquet, "come to me and dine off donkey." The dinner was a great success. The company of "fair women and brave men" had enjoyed the soups, fish, and entrées, and some of them were screwing up their courage to take a slice of donkey on the appearance

of the "joints," when a guest observed to the host, "So far your dinner has been excellent, though rather common-place; but when will Neddy be served?"

The reply staggered the questioner, who subsequently confessed that he had partaken heartily of all the introductory dishes, with the intention of avoiding the asinine *pièce de résistance*.

"My dear fellow," the entertainer answered, "with the exception of the salmon, the chief materials of every dish handed to you were taken from a tender two-years-old donkey, killed six days since by my butcher. The soups, the patties which you mistook for veal patties, the cutlets that you imagined to be lamb, the fillet with truffles, were all of donkey."

Finding he had gone so far in a perilous investigation, the guest went a step further, and took a middle cutlet from "loin of donkey." It combined the texture of the finest mutton with the flavour of roast pig.

No one who went manfully through the equine menu of the Langham Hotel dinner needs to be told that the flesh of a young high-bred horse may be highly palatable and tender. But it is otherwise with meat taken from an animal which has endured the labour and hard usage that fall to the lot of an ordinary horse in its toilsome journey from the

breaker's stable to the knacker's yard. No amount of baiting, beating, and hanging can impart tenderness to the muscles of the hack that has for years spent its energies in the service of an exacting master. All the resources of culinary art fail to intenerate the animal that, after figuring proudly in its youth before a lordly chariot, has "run in a bus," and eventually died between the shafts of a street cab. The flesh of such a toil-hardened and sorely abused creature is rejected by the sausage-makers of Houndsditch. But still it may be made subservient to the needs of the luxurious table. Boiled, minced, and strongly seasoned with pepper, the muscle of the equine carcass, from which hounds would turn disdainfully, becomes a stimulating and nutritious food for poultry. The breeders and rearers of pullets for the Paris market have found that a diet, comprising a large proportion of highly-peppered animal food, is highly conducive to size and quick growth in their feathered stock. On five days of the week they feed their fattening poultry with a paste of meal and vegetables, and on two days give them nothing but well-cooked and highly-peppered meat, which the fowls devour ravenously. The flesh, so minced, boiled, and seasoned, is taken almost entirely from the carcasses of worn-out horses. Hence it is no fiction to say that, whilst enjoying his chicken *mayonnaise* at the "Trois



Frères," the Parisian epicure often eats what a few weeks earlier helped to draw his carriage over the boulevards.

Other systems of fattening fowls are, however, employed by the French poulterers. At Mans it is usual to "bring on" chickens by shutting them in the dark, and cramming them daily with a paste of barley-meal, maize, and milk, that is pushed down their throats to repletion. In some yards the house for fattening birds is fitted with wooden blinds, that enable the poulterer to turn the daylight off and on at pleasure. On the exclusion of the sun's rays the fowls go instantly to the perch, and roost till the light again streams through the *jalousies*, when they come to the ground, and by force of habit fill their crops with food, under the impression that another day has begun. By this means the birds are induced to eat six times as much as they would otherwise devour spontaneously in a day. In former time the French poulterers varied the flavour of their fowls by dieting them, often at prodigious cost, with paste qualified with musk, aniseed, and other aromatic spices. It is recorded of a French queen that she spent 1,500 francs (£60) in imparting a peculiarly delicate flavour to the livers of three geese. A crowing hen, however, never received any such flattering attentions from the French poulterer, who no sooner heard a bird of this abnormal kind give

utterance to inappropriate song than he killed her as a preposterous usurper of masculine rights. An old French proverb says,

“ Poule qui chante, prêtre qui danse,  
Femme qui parle latin,  
N’arrivent jamais à belle fin.”

At present, the task of imparting false flavours to meat is left to the cook, and fowl-rearers are content to exert their ingenuity to bring their young birds to the *maximum* of size and fleshiness in the shortest possible time.

In the sixteenth century the English epicure ate habitually the crane, the stork, the heron-shaw, the bittern, the gull, and the bustard. With the exception of the bustard, still eaten occasionally from curiosity rather than gastronomic preference, these birds are even seen on our tables. Mr. Hayward mentions a fine bustard, sent by Fisher of Duke-street, St. James’s, to Windsor Castle, at a charge of £7 12s. 6d. In Henry the Eighth’s time the price of a fine bustard was four shillings—about £2 10s. of modern money. Speaking of Fisher, the author of the “Art of Dining” says, “He enjoyed the unlimited confidence of Lord Sefton, which is one of the highest compliments that can be paid to any man directly or indirectly connected with gastronomy, and he is, as we believe, the sole purveyor to the royal table. He has, by dint of

diligent study, acquired the art of fattening ortolans, which he sells at a tenth of the price they used to fetch." Chefs have achieved some of their brightest triumphs in dressing such small birds as the ortolan and the becafico. In his delight with twelve becaficoes served in egg-shells, so that they had the external appearance of real eggs, the venerable Duke of C——, commemorated in Soyer's "Pantropheon," turning to the youthful artiste who had prepared the exquisite surprise, exclaimed with fervour, "You are inspired by Petronius; to imitate in such a manner is to create. Courage, my child, I am much pleased with you."

Small birds of the choicer kinds should be withheld from gastronomic novices and mere simpletons, who are strangely apt to mistake them for sparrows and common field-birds, and to devour them in ignorance of their value, if not in total insensibility to their excellence. Out of sheer modesty, a young deacon made his *last* dinner at Archbishop Markham's table on a dish of ruffs and reeves, which he devoured under the impression that such small creatures could have been cooked only for insignificant persons. "Na, na, my leddy, these wee birdies will do verra weel," said the unsophisticated Scotchman whom Lady Louisa Lennox vainly tried to lure from a dish of wheatears which he was

“putting down” his throat, merely because they would “do verra weel.”

To return to large birds. Whilst they were habitual consumers of the stork and crane, our ancestors were also larger eaters of the peacock and the swan, two species of fowl which an Englishman may never have met at table, though he has fared luxuriously for half a century. But for their size and plumage, these fowls of faulty flesh and flavour would never have attained the gastronomic dignity accorded to them from the days of Apicius to those of Giles Rose. The swan is still eaten at civic feasts—Conservative sentiment [enabling aldermen and their people to relish and digest anything. There is literally nothing that a Common Councilman won’t swallow at a Corporation dinner if it is commended to his stomach on the score of “good Old English usage.” The cygnet, however, when fattened for the table by a well-known Norwich poulterer, is almost unobjectionable, so much can art do for the inteneration and dulcification of its flesh. The young swan is sometimes carved at the high tables of the Cambridge colleges; and old-fashioned East-Anglian rectors may even yet be heard to extol it as a “dainty.” From the gastronomic point of view Norwich is emphatically the City of Swans, and in pre-railway times, when bishops were expected to entertain hospitably the clergy summoned to

their palaces, Bishop Stanley delighted in giving his clerical subordinates the diocesan bird under circumstances most favourable for its reputation.

The honour of introducing the peacock to the table is universally attributed to Q. Hortensius, the brilliant advocate and voluptuary, who left his heir ten thousand casks of chian, and at the death of his favourite *muraena* shed tears that remind one of Erskine's fondness for his two leeches. In his foppishness and florid preciseness of diction, Erskine's forensic style, by the way, resembled that of the Roman orator, who loving peacock's flesh, liked also the pea-hen's eggs to such a degree that, when they were scarce, he would buy them at twenty pence a-piece, a price that to the Roman money-eaters heightened greatly the enjoyment of feeding on them.

Mention has been already made of the mediæval peacock feasts; but a few particulars should be added about them. Though usually served whole, or with the appearance of wholeness, in its hackell, "the food of lovers and the meat of lords" (as the bird was fancifully styled) sometimes appeared at table covered with gold-leaf instead of feathers. Stuffed with spices and served on a lordly charger (often of gold and silver) it held in its beak a piece of blazing camphor, and was generally brought to the board by a gentlewoman of high degree. At



the banquet after a jousting in the lists, it was sometimes borne to the feast by the Queen of the Tournament, who placed it before the knight of brightest valour and exploits. On such occasions the distinguished knight, before carving the bird, renewed over its gaudy plumage or gilt surface his oaths of chivalric devotion. To this knightly practice of swearing loyalty over the hackel (which in Elizabethan England contained a minced stuffing like that of a game-pie more often than the mere flesh of the bird), Justice Shallow was indebted for his oath "By cock and pie!" In the thirteenth century a peacock was deemed an appropriate prize for the victor at quintain.

In the King's Lynn brass the peacocks are *sitting* in dishes; but the mediæval cooks knew how to set the roast, and dismembered a bird on his legs, so that with uplifted head, erect comb, and spread tail, it had all the appearances of animation. "Kill a peacock," says Baptista Porta, "either by thrusting a quill into his brain from above, or else cut his throat as you do for young kids, that the blood may come forth, then cut his skin gently from his throat to his tail, and being cut, pull it off with his feathers from his whole body to his head; cut off that with the skin and legs and keep it. Rost the peacock on a spit, his body being stuffed with spices and sweet herbs, sticking first in his brest

cloves, and wrapping his neck in a white linen cloth, that it may never be dry ; when the peacock is roasted and taken from the spit, put him into his own skin again and that he may appear to stand upon his feet you shall thrust small iron wires, made on purpose, through his legs, and set fast on board that they may not be discerned, and through his body to his head and tail. Some put camphire in his mouth, and when he is set on the table they cast in fire. Platira shows that the same may be done with pheasants, geese, capons, and other birds, and we observe these things amongst our guests." By the same, or a similar process, our game-pies are still cased with the plumage of the cock-pheasant.

The peacock, served in the old Roman fashion, was often seen on the Elizabethan table. In satirical reference to the wasteful way in which it was cooked, Massinger in the "City Madam" makes Holdfast speak of "three fat wethers bruised to make sauce for a single peacock," words that have been taken literally by several incautious writers. And so long as it remained in fashion, the peacock was served at other festal times as well as at Christmas, to which season Robert Chambers especially assigns it in his essay on Old English Christmas fare. But apart from qualities that pleased the eye, the gaudy bird had no

virtues to justify the esteem in which it was held by gastronomers for seventeen centuries. Dr. Kitchener observes justly, "This bird is one of those luxuries which were often sought, because they were seldom found; its scarcity and external appearance are its only recommendations, the meat of it is tasteless and tough." But the reputation, which had for sometime been waning, expired in the middle of the seventeenth century, when peacock's flesh ceased to be extolled as a delicacy by nice epicures, though the "cock in hackle" was still commended by chefs as a superb contrivance for decorating the table. The bird was thus used as a mere ornament in the earlier half of the eighteenth century. One can scarcely say that at present it is *never* eaten; but having gratified his curiosity by tasting it once, no epicure desires to repeat the experiment.

Brummell once ate a pea. Alexandre Dumas *once*, and only once, ate a peacock in all the many years of his gastronomic experiences. "Je n'ai mangé du paon qu'une fois dans ma vie," he says, "mais comme il était très-jeune et qu'il pouvait correspondre à ce qu'on appelle le poulet de grain, il me parut excellent." The praise at the end of this sentence is notably qualified by the statement at its beginning. Had he really delighted

in the bird, which in full plume figured at an open-air banquet to which he was invited by his admirers in a small country town, the romantic voluptuary would not have failed to order the meat on subsequent occasions. By the way, this peacock feast was followed quickly by an annoyance. On his return to Paris from the village-town which had received him so enthusiastically, Alexandre wrote copiously to half-a-dozen journals about himself and the bird "avec son cou de saphir." Much to his disgust, the editors of the newspapers returned Alexandre's accounts of an affair that redounded equally to his own credit and the bird's honour. Everything, however, comes to the hero who has enough patience. In his green old age, the author of "Monte Cristo" found an opportunity for using the rejected memoir of a peacock-dinner, which occupies a considerable space of the "Grand Dictionnaire de Cuisine." Another modern, but less recent, peacock-feast was the banquet given towards the close of the last century to a royal duke by the Governor of Grenada, West Indies, when, as we have already observed, a surprise-pie of living birds was opened before the future King of England. The table was a  $\pi$  (pi) table, and the royal bird with spread tail was set in the middle of the cross-board, immediately in front of the royal sailor.

As the peacock fell, the turkey rose in the esteem of epicures. Indeed, both the peacock and the swan may be said to have been driven from the table by the American fowl, which had no sooner crossed the Atlantic, than it was fitly honoured and cherished by the wealthiest gourmands of every European country.

The savans of the last century had a warm controversy respecting the history and original source of the noble fowl which, though inferior to the swan and peacock in plumage, equals the one and surpasses the other in magnitude, and excels both in texture and flavour of meat.

On the one side were those who, confounding the Transatlantic fowl with Guinea fowl, insisted that it was known to the Romans, and had been served at the sumptuous boards of mediæval Europe. Forgetful or ignorant of the quickness with which tobacco had fascinated the peoples of the Old World, and been promptly adopted in the Eastern lands to which it travelled by way of Europe, they argued that, had the first turkeys of the English table come from America, birds of their species would not have abounded in Italy, Spain, France, and this country by the middle of the seventeenth century. So also, unmindful or unaware that maize, long known in England as Turkey corn, was first obtained from America, they urged that the familiar name of the



fowl proclaimed the land of its nativity. Turkeys could only come from Turkey. It was even maintained, on the authority of Barrington, that before they were so called in this country, our ancestors designated them Greek fowls. The "capons of Grease," mentioned by Leland as served at a banquet in the time of Edward the Fourth, were "capons of Greece." On being reminded of the abundance of wild turkeys in America, the disputants on the side of error replied that the earliest West Indian adventurers had doubtless carried turkeys to America, even as they were known to have carried horses and cattle thither, and that the birds encountering in the New World a climate and other conditions highly favourable to them, had propagated with amazing rapidity, and acquired a state of wildness.

On the other hand, it was insisted that, had the fowls come originally from Asia and Africa, and been known to the mediæval poulterers of Southern Europe, they would certainly have attracted the particular attention of writers before the discovery of the New World. For instance, Peter de Crescentis, of the thirteenth century, would not have failed to describe them, as well as pheasants and partridges, in his comprehensive and minute account of the methods of rearing domestic fowls. But not one of all the pre-Columbian writers on

poultry had given a description applicable to the turkey, whose English name—given to the American corn no less than to the American fowls—merely indicated that they had been chiefly imported to this country by the class of merchants who, out of regard to the more ancient and important part of their adventures, were commonly designated *Turkey* merchants in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. “Capons of grease” were only larded capons. As to the daring suggestion that the original turkeys of America were emigrants from Europe, it was observed that, whilst turkeys were found wild in America, it was the only part of the world where they could be found in a state of wildness. It was incredible that after ceasing to be wild in the Eastern lands credited with their origin, they would in a short time recover their primitive wildness, and multiply so rapidly in the New World.

It is worthy of remark in connection with this mistake *from*, and dispute *about*, a name, that the Turkish designation of maize caused some of our Elizabethan ancestors to imagine that Turkey-corn necessarily came from Turkey. Correcting their error, Gerarde says in his chapter on “Turkie-corne”:—“Thes kinds of graine were first brought into Spaine, and then into the other provinces of Europe, not (*as some suppose*) out of Asia Minor,

which is the Turk's dominion, but out of America and the Islands adjoining, as out of Florida, and Virginia and Noremberga, where they used to sow it or set it, to make bread of it." It does not appear that any ignorant disputant ever insisted that Turkey corn was first brought to the New World by the European adventurers of the fifteenth century.

But enough of the dispute which closed, as all disputes do in the long run, on the side of truth. The curious may find a concise statement of conflicting arguments in Beckmann's "History of Inventions;" and also a brief summary of the facts, which demonstrate the bird's Transatlantic origin, in Brillat-Savarin's "Physiologie du Goût." At present it is universally allowed that we are not more certainly indebted to China for tea, than to the Western hemisphere for tobacco, turtle, and turkey. Grimod de la Reynière dismissed the discussion by saying playfully, "What matters it whence the Indian pullet came so long as it is tender?"

The American fowl was naturalized in the more civilized countries of Europe at nearly the same time. The orders for the government of Henry the Eighth's household do not mention the bird, but it came to England before that monarch put aside his first wife and broke with the papacy. In Edward

the Sixth's time turkeys ceased to be novelties at the English table, though they were served only at grand feasts. Under Philip and Mary "Turkey chicks 4, rated at iijs. a piece" (*i.e.* about forty shillings of our current money), were served at the banquet which the serjeants-at-law set before the Lords of the Privy Council. That turkey had become comparatively common fare at luxurious boards, by the middle of Elizabeth's reign, may be inferred from Tusser's allusion to the fowl in the "Five Hundred Points of Husbandry."

Whilst the new fowl received in this country a name which caused our ancestors to think it a native of the East, it acquired in France a designation that resulted in the same misconception. Known as Turkey in London, it was called "poulet d'Inde" at Paris, where, at a later date, it was also familiarly called "le Jésuite," in reference to the common belief that the Jesuits first brought poulets d'Inde into France. The evidence is by no means conclusive that the Jesuits performed this service to European gastronomy; but it is certain that, at an early date of the fowl's European history, they were greatly successful turkey-farmers in the neighbourhood of Bourges. Anyhow, it is to the honour of the holy brothers that their name is so agreeably associated with the bird which Europe quickly learnt to prefer to the swan and peacock. Be it also borne in

mind that these reverend patrons of the turkey were long honoured in Protestant England as the original growers of the best wine for weak stomachs, and as the discoverers of the best medicine for restoring an enfeebled body, and enabling it to relish good cheer. Peruvian bark, called *cinchona* from the Countess del Cinchon, from which quinine is obtained, was long called "Jesuits' bark" by our physicians, in days when port wine was almost as generally called Jesuits' port, the Methuen grape being grown chiefly on estates belonging to the Holy Order.

By the way, whilst softening men's hearts to a sacred brotherhood that has upon the whole been judged with more anger than charity, the turkey is said to have inspired Nicholas Boileau with the animosity which he seized every occasion to exhibit against the Jesuits. The story goes that in his childhood Boileau was running across a court-yard, when he fell upon the stones and exhibited a sensitive part of his person to "a Jesuit" (fowl), that immediately flew at the unfortunate boy and with its beak inflicted serious injury upon him. The sufferer's cries brought timely help; but he was not rescued from the furious bird until he had received wounds that marked him for life. From that time he could never hear "a Jesuit" mentioned without exhibiting alarm and anger; and on growing to



manhood, in resentment for the wrong done him by their bird, he became the fierce and implacable enemy of the holy brothers.

The poet would have expressed his hatred of the bird more fitly and profitably had he, instead of turning upon its importers with pen and tongue, used his teeth upon every *poulet d'Inde* put at his mercy, and endeavoured to eat its whole species out of existence; but he could never regard a roast or boiled turkey with equanimity. Even to think of one roused his wrath. It was otherwise with the invalid mentioned in the *Almanach des Gourmands*, who made a *trivial* addition to the medical order for his dinner. In accordance with his usual practice towards gluttonous convalescents, the physician had ordered *in writing* for this patient's dinner "une cuisse de poulet." Scarcely had the physician taken his departure when the invalid caught up the prescription and, cleverly imitating the physician's hand-writing, added "d'Inde" after "poulet." The draft, thus amended, being duly honoured by his cook, this tamperer with an official document had his reward in a satisfying meal and subsequent laughter at his medical adviser.

The *dindon* has been worshipped in France even more enthusiastically than in England. It figured as the prime delicacy, and also as the *pièce de résistance* in the exemplary dinner which Brillat-

Savarin commemorates as a specimen of good cheer in the time of Louis the Fifteenth. "My only objection to a fine *dindon*," a French gourmand, with powers inferior to his ambition, remarked gravely, "is that when it is cooked I shall not be quite able to eat it all at my solitary dinner." "Why not invite a friend to join you?" the hearer suggested. "Ah, my friend," was the reply, "in that case it would be necessary to order a second *poulet d'Inde*." The old English saying which proclaims the goose a foolish bird for being "too much for one, and not enough for two," is commonly applied in France to the *poulet d'Inde*.

Several French gourmands, however, could be named who, like the French magistrate celebrated in a previous Chapter, regarded the whole of a large turkey stuffed with truffles as no excessive meal for one person. In the spring of his youthful vigour, Masséna's favourite aide-de-camp, General Prosper Sibuet, could eat a fine *dindon* with unqualified enjoyment. Prosper Sibuet was still a sub-lieutenant in his eighteenth year when he entered a restaurant in his native town of Belley—a town of Southern France, famous in gastro-nomic annals as the birth-place of Brillat-Savarin—just in time to see a magnificent turkey taken from the spit. "By Jove!" exclaimed the young soldier, "I will not leave this table till I have eaten

the whole of that bird myself." "Sir," observed a wealthy farmer who was sitting near, and heard the vow with dissatisfaction, as he had resolved to taste the noble creature, "*if* you can devour all that is eatable of that prodigious fowl I will pay for it." Prosper went to work without delay. Having taken down a wing in two mouthfuls, he demolished the neck, clearing every scrap of meat from the bones. After a glass of wine, he next disposed of a leg. It was not till the second wing and second leg had passed down the throat of the boyish sub-lieutenant that the farmer, no longer doubting Prosper's ability to accomplish his enterprise, entreated politely, "Sir, since it is clear that I must pay for the fowl, in your courtesy permit me to taste a morsel." So modest a petition, made in a conciliatory tone, conquered the conqueror: "By all means, Sir," he answered, "don't let me disappoint your appetite. Take what remains of the bird. As for me, I will complete my little repast with the other viands." Till the day when he fell gallantly at the passage of the Bober, General Sibuet delighted to recall this incident of his youth, so creditable to his physical vigour and his politeness.

A good story is told of Brillat-Savarin's conscientious desire to render culinary justice to a superb wild turkey which he had the good fortune to kill during his exile in the United States of

America. He was in the company of the diplomatist and statesman, to whom the Americans of the great republic are indebted even more than to Washington for their constitutional privileges, when Jefferson saw in his countenance an air that betokened absence of mind. "Sir," said Jefferson, who had been vainly exerting his wit and marvellous powers of conversation to fascinate his French visitor, "my talk is inopportune. You are thinking." "A thousand pardons," returned the Frenchman, covering his offence with a full apology and a naïve confession, "a thousand pardons for my inattention. I was thinking how I should dress my wild turkey."

*Apropos* of the French name for the American fowl, the reader should be told that before they agreed to style it "turkey," our ancestors of the sixteenth century often called it "the bird of Inde," or "the Indish pea-cock." The latter term is richly significant, for whilst pointing to the West *Indian* origin of the fowl, it testifies that the bird on its first introduction to this country was regarded as the rival of the peacock, which in course of time it dethroned and superseded. Harrison speaks of a certain treatment of "turkeys or Indian peacocks" as "a new devise."

The time has come to speak of the goose. But a paragraph at the end of a long Chapter would be

no sufficient notice of a bird so famous in history. No fowl has done more than the goose for human enjoyment, or suffered more from human ingenuity and malignity. At least for once it shall be mentioned with due respect and gratitude in a special Chapter.



## CHAPTER V.

## GOOSE.

"Goosie, goosie, gander,  
Where do you wander?  
Up-stairs and down-stairs,  
And in my lady's chamber."

OLD NURSERY RHYMES.

"Yea, poll thyself and prevent others, and give the bailiff or like officer, now a capon, now a pig, now *a goose*, and so to thy landlord likewise, or if thou have a great farm, now a lamb, now a calf."

—TYNDALE'S "EXPOSITION."

"So stubble geese, at Michaelmas, are seen  
Upon the spit, *next May* produces green."

KING'S "ART OF COOKERY."

"The Scottish barnacle, if I might choose,  
That of a worme doth wake a winged goose."

BISHOP HALL'S "SATIRES."

"Like your Scotch barnacle, now a block,  
Instantly a worm, and presently a great goose."

MARSTON'S "MALCONTENT."

WHEN a nurse amuses the babe in her arms by crying "Peep-Boh!" she utters the name of a Gothic general, once terrible to women and warriors. Speaking of the dread captain who commanded the hosts of the Persian Chosroes, Gibbon says, "The name of *Narses* was the formidable sound with which mothers were accustomed to terrify their infants." In like manner, the name

of Odin's warlike son, after serving as a rallying cry to armies, whose foes it filled with fear, became a menace of whipping to fractious children. When it had gradually lost this alarming significance, "Boh" was only a jest of nurses, and a signal of mirth to infants. The sound might startle babes into laughing and crowing, but only provoked older nurslings to retort disdainfully, "Cry Boh to a goose!" The child who could speak was as foolish as a goose if "Boh" could alarm him. So long a time has passed since the goose became a by-word for foolishness to the veriest simpletons of human kind.

In his "Dyets Dry Dinner" Buttes calls a goose "the emblem of *meere* modestie," *i.e.*, of modesty without intelligence and grace. Scaliger (Julius Cæsar) styled it "the fairest emblem of prudence," a description directly discordant with its proverbial reputation of unqualified silliness. By the way, the goose is guilty of few acts that justify this unenviable fame. The female bird lays her eggs with propriety, hatches them with decorum, and discharges her parental duties with sufficient fidelity. The male bird does all that society requires of him. If he intrudes himself into chambers where he is no welcome guest, he in this respect only follows the example of ambitious men. The same defence may be offered for other reprehensible habits of geese,

who are notably *human* in their failings. They are no worse than the wisest of animals in liking to have the last word in a dispute; and if they are quick to pursue a flying enemy, and ever ready to retreat from the invader with a bold face, the same may be said of human rabble. To their credit also, much might be said of their services to civilization and learning. By timely cackling they saved the Roman capital from barbarian hordes: and from ancient times to the bright mid-day of modern science they were chiefly instrumental in transmitting the fruits of human intelligence. The wisdom of silent centuries has come to us through the goose-quill; and even in these iron days the steel pen has not altogether superseded the quill. Châteaubriand never used a steel-pen; Victor Hugo is only one of the many living scribes who refuse to adopt the invention of yesterday. In official circles, the pen of steel is regarded with aversion and is seldom seen. Unable to force the new contrivance on reluctant clerks, financial reform can only insist that the quills of our public offices shall be economically cut and re-cut to their stumps by a salaried pen-mender. England is still governed by the goose-quill.

From its appearance rather than its acts, the goose derives its character for foolishness. In the water less stately and imposing than the swan, it is

on land the awkwardest and ungainliest of feathered creatures. It was said that no one could be so wise as Lord Thurlow looked. No bird can be so foolish as the goose appears when waddling up a turnpike road, or seen with outstretched neck and open beak on a village-green. But there is something human in its graceless aspect and gabbling eloquence. One of our wisest men, Lord Stowell, resembled in a remarkable degree the waddling, cackling goose. Man would have been less disdainful of the bird had he not seen certain aspects of himself in its most ludicrous characteristics.

The fowl, so ungenerously ridiculed by the foolish for its personal defects, has however found friends amongst the learned. Virgil, Scaliger, and De Courchamps are of the number of these nobler spirits. The poet rendered due homage to the birds who saved Rome, by placing on his hero's shield a silver goose with golden wings. With a discretion inferior to his courage, the scholar of the seventeenth century repelled the slanderers of the goose with piquant stories of its sagacity. The vulgar might laugh, because the fowl never sailed under the loftiest bridge without lowering its head lest it should hit the arch; but Scaliger maintained that this needless caution, instead of showing the goose's foolishness, only demonstrated its *excessive prudence*. But the learned man's grandest illustra-

tion of the wisdom of geese, relates to their precautions against the sharp ears of the eagles of Mount Taurus. On preparing to cross the mountain, each goose of a flock takes in its bill a large stone, and having thus "gagged itself," as the negroes were recently gagged in Jamaica, it goes on its silent way, unable to produce the gabble that would attract the enemy. As for the French biographer and *gourmet*, who flourished in the earlier decades of the present century, indignant at the cruelties perpetrated on defenceless geese by the poulterers of Strasbourg, he drew up in their names the petition which implored the peers of France to prohibit the continuance of such atrocities. "Faisant taire les appetances de son estomac sous les cris de sa conscience," the humane author produces an appeal equally powerful and *anserable*. After reciting the processes by which the petitioners were reduced to a state of disease, that was a burlesque of the malady to which their livers were naturally liable, this sublime paper observes,—“Alas! what have we wretched birds done that they should thus blind us, stuff us, torture us? What would you say, noble peers, if any one should devour you, should cut the wings with which you fly so high, should fix you to planks, should nail you to them by your feet, and lastly should pluck out your eyes, in



order to prey on your livers like Prometheus's vulture?"

It is on record that after reading this agonizing prayer from the Strasbourg goose, a French peer, equally celebrated for gastronomic achievement and benevolent enterprise, burst into tears, declaring that he would never again eat the liver of a tortured goose. "And why should I?" he added, when he had overcome the sharpest emotions of compassion, "why should I, since the livers of two Toulouse ducks, treated in the same way, are equal in size and flavour to the largest liver of the Strasbourg goose?" A similar story is told of the English philanthropist, who distinguished himself in the outcry against the barbarities practised on "climbing boys" by the master-chimneysweeps. Having ascertained that a chimney could be well swept by dragging a live goose up it, the reformer wished that the law should make it penal for a sweep to use any other kind of brush to the interior of a chimney. The discovery was original, and the proposal worthy of its maker; but it was objected that method involved some slight cruelty to the goose. "True, poor creature!" observed the humane inventor, "I forgot that. But my *plan* is excellent; and no goose is necessary for its execution. Two ducks would do quite as well."

In justice to the people of Strasbourg, it should be

remembered they were not the first to discover the superior delicacy of the diseased liver of the goose, and to devise means for bringing the organ to the greatest magnitude and highest aggravation of disease. The Strasbourg petitioners only endured such outrages as were, for the same end, imposed on geese by the poulterers of ancient Rome. The modern way of stuffing a goose and duck with a farce-meat of chopt onion and hot spices came also from the same ancient school.

Hatched in the Spring, fed in the yard during Summer, and at the close of harvest sent daily into the stubbles to fill their crops with corn, young geese come to their perfection of size and flavour just in time for the Michaelmas table. They are, in the best sense, *seasonable* at the festal time, when in the ordinary course of things they are, whilst still young and tender, abundant and fleshy. And long before Queen Elizabeth dined off roast goose and Burgundy, under Sir Neville Humfreville's roof, on her way to Tilbury Fort, roast goose was *the seasonable* dish at every good dinner served in England on Michaelmas day. Loving good cheer and eating all good things as soon as they were fairly plentiful and cheap, the English had been Michaelmas-geese-eaters for centuries ere the Spanish Armada was routed and broken to flotsam on their coasts. A fat goose was the

ordinary present every petty tenant brought his landlord on Michaelmas day in the old feudal time, when every person, with dependents from whom he looked at festal seasons for *customary*, and therefore scarcely spontaneous, presents, received their contributions to his larder as matters of course. So far back as the tenth year of Edward the Fourth, John de la Haye, in acknowledgment of his tenure of certain lands, was bound to render to William Barnaby, Lord of Lastres, Co. Hereford, a fat goose for the said lord's dinner on the feast of St. Michael the Archangel. This fact would of itself discredit the absurd story that our practice of eating goose on Michaelmas day had its origin in the dinner which Elizabeth ate at Sir Neville's table, shortly before she received the welcome news of the Armada's destruction. A goose was one of the customary gifts which Tyndale, the reformer, enjoined poor farmers to pay with apparent willingness to their landlords; and at least eighteen years before the Armada sailed to disaster, George Gascoigne wrote,

“And when the tenauntes come to paie their quarter's rent,  
They bring some fowle at Midsummer, a dish of fish in Lent,  
At Christmasse a capon, at Michaelmas a goose,  
And somewhat else at New Yere's tide, for fear their lease flie  
loose.”

That Elizabeth ate goose on the memorable day

of St. Michael is more than probable. Indeed, it is highly improbable that the fowl was absent from the dinner set before her. But instead of establishing a custom by the meal, she merely observed the ancient usage, which gave us the saying, "If you eat goose on Michaelmas day you will never want money all the year round." In reference to this adage, a writer in the *British Apollo* for 1709, says,

- Q. "Yet my wife would persuade (as I am a sinner)  
 To have a fat goose on St. Michael for dinner,  
 And then all the year round, I pray you would mind it,  
 I shall not want money—oh! grant I may find it!  
 Now several there are that believe this is true,  
 Yet the reason of this is desired from you.
- A. "We think you're so far from the having of more,  
 That the price of the goose you have less than before:  
 The custom came up from the tenants presenting  
 Their landlords with geese, to incline their relenting  
 On following payments."

Gascoigne's lines show how our ancestors came to think it good policy to be no savers of goose at Michaelmas time. Whilst money came all the year round to tenants and others, who by paying the goose-tax readily kept in the favour of their betters, poverty was seen to befall farmers who lost their leases, and dependents who lost their patrons by omitting to render the customary gift. It followed from this state of things that the man

who would prosper, should think little of the cost of geese at Michaelmas time. He should give them freely at that season to the companions of his table, as well as to higher folk. Rather than grudge the choice viand, it was well for him to eat it prodigally.

Whilst our feudal ancestors ate stubble geese at Michaelmas feasts, they spoke much of a kind of geese called barnacle geese, which were said to be palatable food. John Gerarde, the learned herbalist, described this marvellous fowl minutely in the first section (1597) of his famous work on plants. Something bigger than the mallard, and smaller than the common goose, it had "black legs, and bill, and beak, and feathers blacke and white, spotted in such a manner as is our magpie, called in some places a pie-anet." The Pile of Flounders, a small island on the Lancashire coast, abounded with geese of this description, which were commonly sold in the Lancashire markets for threepence a piece. They were also plentiful in the Orchades, the Isle of Man, and many points of the Irish coasts. They might also be found occasionally, in an imperfect state, on the banks of the Thames; but as sea-water was necessary for their perfect development, the specimens of the barnacle goose (or duck) taken in the Thames may be described as embryonic. Whilst divines debated whether these birds partook so far



of the nature of fish that they might be eaten on fast-days, naturalists (of the highest repute for sagacity *in their time*) questioned whether the perplexing creatures should be rated as fish, fowl, or vegetable. It could not be denied that they had a fishy origin, for they had been seen to proceed from such barnacles as are often found adhering to the bottoms of ships. The barnacle goose was the barnacle in its highest development. But the creature with webbed feet, feathers, and close resemblance to a water-duck could scarcely be ranked with salmon and oysters. Lastly, was it not rather to be regarded as the fruit of a tree?

In the Orcades, Lancashire, Man, and Ireland trees were often seen with branches bending beneath the weight of barnacles, from whose gaping shells came forth fowls that, dropping into the sea, attained their full size in the water. "When it is perfectly formed," Gerarde says of the barnacle, "the shell gapeth open, and the first thing that appeareth is the foresaid lace or string; next come the legs of the bird hanging out, and as it groweth greater it openeth by degrees, till at length it is all come forth, and hangeth only by the bill; in short space after it cometh to full maturitie, and falleth into the sea, where it gathereth feathers, and groweth to maturitie." Under these circumstances, was not the fish-goose so closely allied to the vege-

table kingdom (which had at least provided it with a foster-mother) that it should be named amongst the fruits of plants?" Gerarde answered this question in the affirmative by writing his chapter "Of the Goose-tree, Barnacle-tree, or the Tree bearing Geese"—a chapter which he illustrated with a picture of a goose-tree putting forth a fully-fledged goose. What makes the author's testimony on this subject noteworthy beyond the evidence of other writers about the tree-geese, is his solemn declaration that, instead of writing from hearsay reports, he is giving the results of his personal observance on the Lancashire coast. "But what our eies have seene, and hands have touched, we shall declare."

Gerarde was not the first naturalist to publish a printed description and picture of the British goose-tree. An account of the tree and its progeny may be found in Pena and Lobel's "*Stirpium Adversaria Nova*," published in London some years before the appearance of Gerarde's "*Herbal*," which was frankly and with due acknowledgment based upon the "*Stirpium Adversaria Nova*." Pena and Lobel speak of the bird-barnacles as "*Britannicæ Conchæ Anatiferæ*," and, instead of magnifying the fowls into geese, are content to call them ducks. It does not appear that they were ever present at the actual birth of a tree-fowl, but they assure us they had often eaten one, and found it taste like a duck or wild

goose. "Sapit nobis editantibus anatem aut anserem sylvestrem." Unlike the goose-tree of the later "Herbal," Pena and Lobel's duck-tree exhibits no bird in the act of coming from a barnacle still adhering to the wood. On the contrary, the maturing barnacles are seen dropping to the water beneath its branches, whilst the surface of the sea is alive with minutest ducklings. This difference of the two pictures is noteworthy.

Though Gerarde took the greater part of the materials of his "Herbal" from the "Stirpium Adversaria Nova," it does not follow that he derived his knowledge of the fowl-tree from Pena and Lobel. On the contrary, it is highly probable that *they* were indebted to *him* for their notes on the British duck-bearing shells. Gerarde was closely intimate with the Flemish botanist, whose name is perpetuated in the Linnæan term *Lobelia*, and whose death at extreme old age occurred at Highgate so late as the year 1616. The Englishman assisted Lobel in bringing the "Stirpium Adversaria Nova" through the press, and at the same time gave him particulars respecting British plants. When Gerarde produced the "Herbal," founded on Lobel's work, the latter wrote him a cordial letter of congratulation, containing graceful reference to former kindnesses. From the terms of this hearty, though pedantic, epistle it is obvious that if Gerarde took largely

from the "Stirpium," the Flemish *savan* had on his first arrival in England used his friend's "collections" with equal freedom.

If Gerarde did not himself enlighten the foreign naturalists respecting the duck-tree, and buy the ducks (barnacle?) on which they feasted repeatedly, he was at least accountable for the picture of the marvel in their work. As one of the correctors for the press, he sanctioned the illustration, if he did not direct the artist who produced it. A comparison of the earlier sketch and later portraiture enables us, therefore, to see how the goose-marvel grew in the botanist's imagination. During the interval between 1570 and 1597 his ducks had become geese, and instead of being born on the water, they changed from fish to fowl, whilst still upon the tree.

When they could observe thus loosely, and hasten to such preposterous conclusions, the special investigators of nature needed sorely the admonitions and discipline of the Baconian philosophy.

William Harrison was one of the many shrewd writers who accepted for truth those fables about fish turning to birds, and trees producing fowl. Lobel's book had been published only some fourteen years and was still regarded as a novelty of literature, when Harrison picked from the keel of a ship

in the Thames a barnacle in which he "saw the proportion of a foule more perfectlie than in all the rest, saving that the head was not yet formed, because the fresh water had killed them all, and thereby hindered the perfection." He adds, "Certainly the feathers of the taile hoong out of the shell at least two inches, the wings (almost perfect touching forme) were garded with two shels or sheldes proportioned like the selfe wings, and likewise the brest-bone had the coverture of a shelly substance, and altogether resembling the figure which Lobell and Pena do give in their description of this foule; so that I am now fullie persuaded that it is either the barnacle" (*i.e.*, the sea-fowl, which bore the same name as the shell-fish), "that is ingendered after this manner in these shells, or some other sea-foule to us as yet unknownen." Elizabethan literature contains many allusions to the barnacle - goose. Hall mentions it in his "Satires," and Marston in the "Malcontent."

But it would be unfair to suggest that the Elizabethan English were universal believers in the goose-tree. Whilst the populace swallowed the fable from sheer ignorance, and many students accepted it out of simple reliance on scientific inquirers like Lobel, the country contained a considerable minority of men whose robust common sense saved



them from the general error. From the terms in which Harrison and Gerarde maintain the Lobelian delusion, it is evident that they anticipated and encountered ridicule for their credulity.

## CHAPTER VI.

## GAME.

"The haunch was a picture for painters to study,  
 The fat was so white, and the lean was so ruddy,  
 Tho' my stomach was sharp, I could scarce help regretting  
 To spoil such a delicate picture by eating."

GOLDSMITH'S "HAUNCH OF VENISON."

"Fesaunt exceedeth all fowles in sweetnesse and holsomnesse, and is equal to capon in nourishynge. . . . Partryche of all fowles is most soonest digested, and heth in hym moch nutriment."—SIR T. ELYOT'S "CASTLE OF HELTH."

"Like as a fearefull partridge, that is fledd  
 From the sharp hauke which her attacked neare,  
 And falls to ground to seek for succor there,  
 Where, as the hungry spaniells she does spy,  
 Withgreedy jawes her ready for to teare."

SPENSER'S "FAERIE QUEEN."

"The merry brown hares came leaping  
 Over the crest of the hill  
 Where the clover and corn lay sleeping,  
 Under the moonlight still."

CHARLES KINGSLEY'S "BAD SQUIRE."

READERS familiar with Mr. Philip Evelyn Shirley's "English Deer-Parks," a book that should be found in every comprehensive English library, do not need to be reminded that our ancestors of olden time regarded deer as stock for the table, rather than as creatures for chase, and that they slaughtered them in ways utterly repug-

nant to the feelings of modern sportsmen. Instead of pitting their craft, patience, and bodily endurance against the suspicious timidity of the antlered game, or surpassing its fleetness with horse and hound, they were chiefly studious to kill it under circumstances that left it no chance of escape. Our earliest followers of the noblest creatures ever hunted on English soil were much less sportsmen than pot-hunters, compared with whose murderous arrangements for success in butchery the method of the Hurlingham pigeon-shooters is manly and generous. Long before the Normans introduced the "saltatorium," the Saxons shot buck and doe from the hiding-places of the "haia."

A labyrinth of alleys, cut in a part of the wood to which the deer could be readily driven from the surrounding covert, the deer-hay afforded perfect concealment to the archers who found their indolent pastime in sending bolts at the game that ran along the narrow defiles within a few feet of their cross-bows. The only persons to take any honest exercise in this cowardly chase were the park-keepers and servile foresters, who beat the wood and scared the victims to the scene of slaughter. These servants carried horns and were accompanied by dogs. But whilst the sole function of the hounds was to frighten the deer towards the "haia," the horns were only blown to increase the terror of the

flying herd. When the panic-stricken creatures had run into the haia's chief approaches, which narrowed towards the middle of the labyrinth, the preliminary labour was at an end, and the sport began. The ambushed marksman, who made a fat buck reel and topple over within a yard of his feet, deemed himself a hero. If he missed his aim, he was consoled for a momentary disappointment by remembering that one or more of his hidden comrades would benefit by his misadventure. For the stag there was no retreat, or any escape but death. The haia was full of bowmen; and maddened by the sounding horns and clamorous dogs, the game bounded wildly along the narrowing defiles of the deadly maze until he met the bolt that laid him low. Such was the deer-hay in which the Saxon Thurstân, of pre-Norman time, spent the happiest of his hours.

The Saxon deer-hays discredit the opinion, held by several able antiquaries, that the Normans were the first landholders to surround deer-parks in this country with fences. It is certain that the Normans had for centuries thus kept the game within bounds on their French estates; and it is highly probable that their practice of enclosing parts of their forests for the safe and convenient imprisonment of deer, was derived from those ancient princes of Gaul whose fenced parks are described by Columella.

But though the Normans greatly increased the number of fenced chases in this island, the purpose and arrangements of the Saxon "haia" forbid us to believe that England had no empaled hunting-grounds before the Conquest. Inclosure must have preceded the contrivances for capturing and killing the deer at a certain spot. Without inclosure, the haia would have been ineffectual. In the absence of provisions for keeping an adequate supply of stock in the neighbourhood of the labyrinth, the concealed marksman would have often skulked behind tree or thicket for a whole day without getting a single shot. It is, moreover, incredible that the elaborate device for obtaining at will the barbarous excitement and material profit of a murderous slaughter of the helpless animals, came into fashion immediately after the adoption of inclosures.

There is, however, no doubt that our fenced parks became more and more numerous throughout the Norman period, and that they were maintained in the interests of larder quite as much as for the sake of sport. The empaled chase was the sylvan yard where the lord of a wide demesne preserved the hardy stock, that supplied his table with fresh meat during the seasons when his menial dependents subsisted chiefly on powdered beef and mutton. It was also the yard where he amused himself with butchery. Not content with the excitement of kill-



ing his game-stock in a labyrinth, he seldom neglected to dig a saltatorium in his slaughtering grounds, if he had enough influence to get a special licence to construct one on his premises. The saltatory or deer-leap was a covered pit-fall into which the deer were driven by their sportive followers. It was usually dug at a part of the enclosure where there was free running for the game, and where the treacherous prospect afforded it hopes of escape. Putting forth all its speed, the flying creature would be increasing the distance between its heels and mounted persecutors, when on springing over a line of faggots and straggling furze-bushes, that might be mistaken for a weak point in the chase's boundary, it lighted on treacherous turf, and fell with a crash into the fatal pit. Often the fall was so deep that it broke the legs of the outwitted animal. Anyhow, when a deer had once dropped through the dry sticks and delusive turf of the pit-fall's covering, its running had ended. A minute later the lord of the chase rode up to the margin of the death-pit, and deliberately dispatched his victim with the cross-bow. One of the inquiries ordered by a Court of Swainmote was, "Item, whether any man have any great chase within three miles of the forest, that have any saltories or great gaps, called deer-lopes, to receive deer into them when they be

in chasing, and when they are in them they cannot get out again."

Towards the close of the feudal period, the laws of the chase forbade such brutal expedients for killing deer; but long before the deer-hay and deer-leap had been universally discarded as cowardly and unsportsmanlike contrivances, epicures had begun to question whether venison was not an over-rated viand. Several of our Elizabethan writers condemn its "hardness," and accuse it of "breeding melancholy." Cogan calls it roundly an "unwholesome flesh," and marvels that a meat, so injurious to health and deficient in tenderness, should be "the desire of all foulkes, insomuch that many will rashly venture their credit, yea, and sometimes their lives too, to steale venison when they cannot otherwise come by it." It must, however, be conceded that if young Shakespeare risked credit and life in a raid on Sir Thomas Lucy's deer-park, he only yielded to an appetite that was excusable in the days when the best of butcher's meat was poor stuff, and oxen were seldom sent to the shambles before field-labour had given them thews of steel. Whatever the grounds for thinking him guilty of the crime, the poet must be acquitted of the graver offence—a gastronomic blunder. Lord Everingham says in "Coningsby," "Their breeds of sheep must have been very inferior in old time, as they made such a noise about their

venison. For my part, I consider it a thing as much gone by as tilts and tournaments."

In the times to which this pithy speaker referred, our ancestors, with an abundance of mutton, cannot be strictly said to have had a single breed of sheep. The first principles of the breeders' art were undiscovered, and centuries had still to pass away ere Preston should be justified in boasting, "Only give me time, and I'll give you a sheep with its 'leg' on the 'shoulder.'" Even Lord Everingham, with all his disdain for feudal fare, would admit that before turnip-husbandry and the dawn of the breeder's science, venison surpassed all the commoner meats in flavour and texture.

Whilst Elizabethan epicures and physicians were disparaging venison, they spoke handsomely of pheasant. It exceeded "all fowles in sweetnesse and wholesomeness." Cogan calls it "meat for princes and great estates, and for poor scholars when they can get it." One would think more highly of the epicurean discernment of the eulogists of a noble bird, had they not recommended us to stew it with celery, a miserable way of spoiling fine fare that cannot be denounced too warmly, though boiled pheasants and celery are still sometimes seen on the tables of intelligent, albeit whimsical, *gourmets*. Whilst its attractive plumage has disposed gastro-nomic writers and the multitude to magnify the

considerable virtues of the pheasant, a dusky exterior and insignificant shape have made them reluctant to do full justice to the partridge. Recognizing it civilly, the olden epicure seldom praised the partridge cordially, though it is unquestionably superior to some of the larger and more showy birds that he honoured with emphatic eulogy. There are few table-stories of the bird, whose fame suffers from its mean appearance, in the absence of such extraordinary merits as extort homage under any circumstances. Grimod de la Reynière, however, tells a partridge story that may be given as an illustration of bad manners and worse wit. A Parisian epicure of the First Empire, known in gastronomic circles for his passionate love of partridges, was at a dinner where only two partridges were served for four people. As half a bird was no sufficient supply of his favourite game for the amateur of partridges, he was quick in appropriating the brace under cover of a pleasantry. "Look my friends," he exclaimed, "it is a holy marriage. The one bird is male, the other female. Let no one separate those whom the Lord has joined together." As he spoke, the ruffian put both the birds on his own plate, and had demolished them before his companions could discover the excellence of the jest. Given as a specimen of gastronomic sprightliness, this anecdote is scarcely successful.

Grimod's sense of humour was less fine than his palate.

"My good man," said the Prince Regent, accosting a bearer of game as he walked up St. James's Street with Sheridan, "is that your own *hare* or a wig?" The Prince's admirers declared they had never heard him throw off a better pun, and perhaps they spoke the truth. As for the carrier of the game, which had occasioned the *jeu d'esprit*, he was indignant at the unmannerly reference to his artificial locks, and was already inviting the greatest gentleman of Europe to "come out into the street," when the latter assuaged his reasonable anger with a five-shilling piece.

Some seven hundred years before this street scene Martial wrote,

"In aves turdus, si quis me iudice certet,

Inter quadrupedes gloria prima lepus.

Of all the birds, the thrush I deem the best,

'Mong quadrupeds, the hare beats all the rest."

In both these opinions the epigrammatist had the hearty concurrence of all contemporary gastronomers. The Romans were prodigious thrush-eaters, spending vast sums on the aviaries (planted with laurels and myrtles, and watered with meandering rivulets), in which they kept thousands of birds whose notes were not more dulcet to the ear than their flesh was sweet to the taste. Fifty years



since it was calculated that the pigeons annually consumed in France amounted to nearly five million pounds' weight of solid flesh. The consumption of thrushes in Ancient Rome was no less astoundingly large. But if the Roman epicure's pulse quickened at the song of the bird which he cooked in half a score ways, his eyes and teeth watered with ecstasy at the smell of hare. He could not name the living quadruped without emotion, and when he spoke of the fascinations imparted to it by cookery, he became poetical. All our modes of cooking the hare are of Roman origin. The Roman stewed it, jugged it, baked it, minced it, potted it, roasted it. But he worshipped the sacred animal most devoutly when it had been stuffed with farce-meat and roasted to a turn.

Throughout the Middle Ages the hare appears to have maintained its ancient reputation for richness and delicacy of flavour. The cooks who followed the instructions of "The Forme of Cury" seldom mixed it with other meats, but preferred to cook it separately, in order that its peculiar taste should not suffer from confusion with other flesh-flavours. This fact is very significant of the esteem in which hare was held at a time when the most incongruous materials were combined in hotch - potches. For "Hares in talbotes," the Forme says, "Take hares and hewe hem to gobettes and seethe hem with the

blode, unwaished, in broth; and whan they both ynouh, cast them in cold water. Pyke and waishe hem clene. Cole the broth, and drawe thurgh stynnor. Take other blode, and cast in boyling water; seethe it, and drawe it thurgh a stynnor. Take almondes unblanched, waishe hem, and grynde hem, and temper it up with the self-broth. Cast al in a pot. Take oynonns and parboile them, smyte hem small, and cast hem into this pot. Cast thereinne powdor-fort, vynegar, and salt." In the same work appears the following receipt for "Hares in Papdele:" "Take hares, parboile hem in gode broth. Cole the broth, and waisshe the fleysh, cast azeyn to gydre. Take obleys, other wafronns, instede of lozeyns, and cowche in dysshes. Take powdor-douce, and lay on, salt the broth, and lay onoward, and messe forth." On the revival of letters, the hare was honoured by the moderns as cordially as it had ever been honoured by the mediævalists or classic ancients.

Cogan insisted that hare, like venison, was "indigestible and apt to breed melancholy," but he admitted that, whilst epicures devoured it with keen relish, physicians found it of singular efficacy for the cure of several diseases. Mattioli, Maximilian the Second's physician, prescribed hare's liver, dried and reduced to powder, as a specific for derangements of the liver. The same physician used to

bake the whole hare, skin and all, in an oven till it was so completely deprived of moisture that the pestle and mortar could grind the charred flesh to a fine powder, which was deemed a sovereign remedy for such sufferers as in our time seek relief from Sir Henry Thompson. Had Napoleon the Third languished in Elizabethan times of the disorder that killed him in Victorian England, he would have been dieted on raw hare's kidneys, and a porridge of barley-meal and hare's blood. "The gaule of hare," says Cogan, "doth take away flewmes of the eye, and helpeth dimnesse of sight." The stronger hairs of the hare, when burnt, afforded a good powder for staunching the blood of open wounds, and the sufferer from bleeding at the nose was admonished to snuff up his nostrils the soft down plucked from the belly of a leveret. At the same time "the ankle-bone of the foote of an hare," worn as an amulet, was "goode against the cramp." So late as the middle of the last century "Pulvis Leporis" was mentioned respectfully by our writers on pharmacy.

No reader of this page needs to be told that once upon a time Mrs. Glasse wrote a cookery-book for the enlightenment of English housekeepers, and that the learned matron opened her directions for roasting a hare with the famous words, "*First catch your hare.*" But some readers will now learn

for the first time that no Mrs. Glasse ever wrote a manual for English cooks, and a far larger number of readers will hear with surprise that no edition of the cookery-book, published under the *nom de plume* of Mrs. Glasse, contains the proverbial order, "First catch your hare." One is reluctant to demolish a pleasant fiction which has caused merriment for half a century, and re-appears from time to time in the leading articles of our best journals, but historic justice requires that the gentlewoman who never lived should be acquitted of the charge of writing the receipt which no one ever penned.

In his witty, but not severely accurate "Art of Dining," Mr. Hayward says, "Mrs. Glasse's book was written by Dr. Hunter." The doctor did no such thing. The culinary treatise of Dr. Hunter, of York, was a very different performance from "Mrs. Glasse's book." No man of his time was more familiar with the secrets of "the trade," of which he was a most respectable member, than Edward Dilly, who is so often mentioned in Boswell's "Johnson." The Brothers Dilly (Edward and Charles) were the booksellers of the Poultry at whose hospitable table Johnson often dined in fit company with wits and scholars. Johnson used to style them his "worthy friends," and certainly Edward was worthy of credence when, in the hearing of Boswell, Miss Seward, Dr. Mayo, and the

Duke of Bedford's tutor, the Reverend Mr. Beresford, he observed to Dr. Johnson, "Mrs. Glasse's 'Cookery,' which is the best, was written by Dr. Hill. Half the trade know this." Of course Johnson acknowledged the information by questioning its accuracy.

In a career of grievous humiliations and notable successes, the author thus mentioned at a literary dinner-party had plied a facile pen on many subjects. A man of singular energy and some cleverness, he was no less remarkable for the industry that gave him wealth than for the egregious vanity that for more than thirty years made him the mark of satire as spiteful, and of slander as unscrupulous, as his own. Apothecary, actor, pamphleteer, dramatic author, novelist, gossiping journalist, physician, naturalist, and quack-doctor, he considered himself competent to judge every artist, and answer every question. A Jack-at-all-the-scribbling-trades, his enemies styled him Dr. Atall, when, on the strength of a St. Andrew's degree, he styled himself *Dr. Hill*, a title which he relinquished towards the close of his days. Having married Lord Ranelagh's sister, and obtained the Swedish decoration of the Polar Star, he ordered a compliant world to call him Sir John Hill. A volume could be made of anecdotes to his discredit, and of scornful epigrams hurled at him by wits who derided his pretentions,



by men of honour who disdained his untruthfulness, or by Grub Street hacks who hated him for thriving on arts which only yielded them the barest subsistence. At present, few of these pasquinades are remembered by the public, with the exception of the epigram which attributed his death to his own gout-tincture, and the stinging lines in which Garrick expressed an equal contempt for his medicine and dramas,—

“For physic and farces,  
His equal there scarce is,  
His farces are physic,  
His physic a farce is.”

“He used,” Johnson said of Hill, or (as some Boswellian editors suspect) of some other scribe to whom the description could not have been more applicable, “to write anonymous books, and then other books commending those books, in which there was something of rascality.” John Hill was still following the business of an apothecary in St. Martin’s Lane, and had for years been working obscurely in the service of booksellers, when he bethought him to gather together the receipts of half-a-score old cookery-books, and work them up with new phrases and a little new material into a dictionary of food for the use of housekeepers and kitchen-servants.

The enterprise cost him but little labour ; and when

the compilation was ready for the press, he decided to bring it out at his own risk and without the co-operation of a publisher. Instead of selling the work through the book-trade, he would distribute its copies at shops more frequented than book-stalls by the class of women most likely to buy the new treatise. In George the Second's time Mrs. Ashburn kept a flourishing china and glass shop in Fleet Street, which attracted customers from all the most fashionable quarters of the town. For a modest commission—a much smaller percentage than the publishers' allowance to mere book-sellers—Mrs. Ashburn agreed to sell the cookery-book over her counter, and press it upon the ladies who bought her decanters and tea-cups. To catch the ladies who were apt to resent masculine interference in kitchen affairs, the apothecary of letters deemed it prudent to announce on the title-page that the compiler was a lady. Moreover, he had no wish to figure openly in a department of literature beneath his scientific and philosophic dignity. As the author of a cookery-book he would fail to conciliate the Royal Society, to which he hoped to be elected in the course of a few years, through the influence of the Duke of Richmond and Lord Petre, who had already recognised his botanical acquirements and commended him to the chief *savans* of the town.

The book, thus produced at the compiler's risk, without the intervention of a publisher, bore this title-page, "The Art of Cookery made Plain and Easy; which far exceeds anything yet published. By a Lady. Printed for the Author, and sold at Mrs. Ashburn's, a china shop, the corner of Fleet Ditch, 1745." The book was needed, and it was executed with sufficient ability. Together with lots of crockery and glass, it went from Mrs. Ashburn's store to houses in every district of the town. Ladies, who would not have seen it at book-stalls, encountered it in the glass-shop, bought it, and sent their friends to buy it. A second edition was quickly demanded, scarcely more to the delight of Mr. Hill than of Mrs. Ashburn (or Ashburner, as the name is spelt in some of the editions), who, whilst getting more than she had anticipated from her per-centage on the sale, saw that the book was an attraction which filled her rooms with new customers for other wares. The second edition disappeared with equal rapidity. On the appearance of the third edition, the book was announced as the work of "Mrs. Glasse," a *nom de plume* probably suggested by the chief ware of the glass-shop. In due course it was followed by the "Complete Confectioner; or, The Whole Art of Confectionary made Plain and Easy. By H. Glasse, Author of 'The Art of Cookery.' Sold at Mrs. Ashburner's

china-shop, the corner of Fleet Ditch; at Yewd's hat warehouse, near Somerset House; at Kirk's toy-shop, in St. Paul's Church-Yard; and at Dend's toy-shop, facing Arlington Street, Piccadilly." The alteration of the *nom de plume*, by the substitution of the initial letter of *Hill*, may perhaps indicate that the compiler was slightly disposed to avow his production of a work which had become so successful that, besides being accepted as an authority in the best kitchens of the town, it was often given to brides as a wedding present. Subsequent editions came forth with title-pages in which the book was variously assigned to "H. Glasse," "Mrs. Glasse," and "A Lady." When the two works had been floated into a large and increasing circulation through shops, chiefly supported by womankind, they were combined in a grand new edition of "The Art of Cookery," that was sold by "all the principal booksellers of the town."

John Hill *is said* to have made £1,500 a year by his pen whilst his literary success was at its height, and the prodigious sale of the cookery book, on terms singularly advantageous to the compiler, renders the statement credible. He certainly lived with every appearance of affluence at a time when his writings were his chief, if not his only, sources of emolument. At a later period, having out-

written himself, and lost his hold on readers, he prospered as a seller of "nostrums," driving a showy carriage, keeping two houses, and faring sumptuously to the last.

But no edition of "The Art of Cookery" contains the famous receipt. The story of that receipt arose from a reader's mistake. The directions for roasting a hare in the original edition open with, "Take your hare when it is cased, and make a pudding, &c." A later edition says, "Take your hare when it is *cased*, truss it in this manner, &c." In the grand edition, with a hundred and fifty new receipts and a copious index, the order also opens with "Take your hare when it is *cased*." The same word is used by the author of "The Court and Kitchen of Elizabeth, Commonly called Cromwell," (1664). Directing the cook how to dress a leveret, he says, "Case your leveret," *i.e.*, skin it. Our old writers often call an animal's skin its *case*, and use the same word as a verb with the meaning to "uncase" or "remove the skin." In the "Anatomy of Melancholy," Burton says, "For generally, as with rich furred conies, their *cases* are far better than their bodies, and like the bark of the cinnamon tree, which is dearer than the whole bulk, their outward accoutrements are far more pretious than their inward endowments." In "All's Well that Ends



Well," we read, "We'll make you some sport with the fox ere we case him." In the familiar term "case-hardened," *i.e.*, skin-hardened, *case* still retains a signification which, though it has fallen out of use in later time, was a common meaning of the word in the seventeenth, and not a rare one in the earlier half of the eighteenth century.

Ignorant of this meaning of "case," a flippant reader of "The Art of Cookery" regarded it as a misprint for "catched." Having thus improved the text, he imagined, or felt justified in saying, that Mrs. Glasse wrote, "First catch your hare."

## CHAPTER VII.

## BREAD AND VEGETABLES.

“Kutte with your knyf your brede, and breke yt nouhte.”

THE BABEE’S BOOK.

“Drinke holsum drinke, and feede bee on list breed.”

A DIATORIE (A.D. 1430).

“Non fermentatus panis bene corpora nutrit,  
Ventrem procurat.”

MODUS CŒNANDI.

“At the same time, at certain seasons of the year, we all appreciate asparagus, cabbages, broccoli, and cauliflowers, and this group of plants contains albumen; but fibrine is the form of the proteinaceous substances from which we derive the largest quantity of our flesh-forming food, and this fibrine is contained in wheat, barley, oats, rye, maize, rice, potatoes, and a great number of other vegetable foods.”—DR. LANKESTER’S “LECTURES ON FOOD.”

IN Elizabethan England the “yield” of good wheat land varied from sixteen to twenty bushels per acre. In the northern parts of the country the yield on a large crop was somewhat less than sixteen bushels, but in the southern counties good farmers of the best land often grew more than twenty bushels. As barley-growers, they were more successful, a good crop of that corn often producing as much as six-and-thirty bushels per acre.

Besides a bread called “miscelin,” in which

wheaten bran was an ingredient, our Elizabethan ancestors made five kinds of wheat-bread :—1. Manchet. 2. Cheat. 3. Raveled cheat. 4. Brown, of the first quality. 5. Brown, of the second quality. Manchet, the bread of the higher tables of aristocratic houses, was made in small loaves that, on leaving the oven, weighed only six ounces each. It was the bread commended by old writers as “white” and “sweet.” Of a “grey or yellowish colour,” cheat—the household bread of superior families—was made of flour, from which the coarsest bran (called gurgeons or pollard) had been taken. Raveled cheat, the usual bread of fairly prosperous citizens, was made of meal, from every bushel of which two-and-twenty pounds of bran had been taken. On leaving the oven, the loaf of raveled cheat weighed sixteen ounces, and was sold in towns in accordance with the sliding-scale of King John’s statute for regulating the price of bread. The better brown was made of the wheaten meal, as it came from the mill, without any abstraction of flour or bran. Inferior brown, having scarcely any flour in it, was made almost entirely of the bran taken from the meal of which manchet and cheat were manufactured. “It was the corn-food,” says Harrison, “appointed in olden time for servants, and slaves, and the inferiour kind of people to feed upon.” To give consistency to

the dry and brittle loaves of the inferior brown, rye-meal was often mixed with the bran-dough, in which case the compound was designated "miscelin." The Elizabethans had also other breads—black bread, made of rye, barley-bread, oaten-bread, bean-bread, and pea-bread, and breads made of the mixtures of these cheaper kinds of meal. As we have remarked in an earlier chapter, acorns were worked into bread-stuff in times of scarcity, by the most indigent of the Elizabethan populace.

Cogan agreed with most of the doctors of his time in thinking unleavened bread unwholesome, and even threw discredit on "simnels, cracknels, bunnies, wafers, fritters, and pancakes," as farinaceous foods lacking the ingredient that would have made them digestible. Pastry is regarded with dislike by many valetudinarians, on account of its "richness," though they will eat plentifully of bread buttered thickly; but their prejudice against a generally innocent preparation originated probably in the old prejudice against unleavened flour-food.

Whilst unleavened bread was generally condemned for unwholesomeness, the author of the "Modus Cœnandi" ventured to declare in Latin, which Professor Seeley has Englished, "Bread *not* fermented nourishes the body well; it is good for the stomach," a fact abundantly demonstrated by the consumers of rice and maize, and those of the

Scotch who live chiefly on unfermented oatmeal. Indeed, modern science has utterly discredited the old denouncers of unleavened bread, which hurts no man, whilst fermented bread, though perfectly wholesome to the majority, has been proved to be very injurious to a small minority of feeders. "On some persons," says Dr. Lankester, "fermented bread acts as a poison." In late years, popular opinion has in more than one of our largest cities declared strongly against the general consumption of fermented bread, as a hurtful preparation; and processes—those of Dr. Whiting and Dr. Dauglish—have been invented for vesiculating bread-stuff without the aid of fermentation. Whilst Dr. Whiting's method achieves its end by putting carbonate of soda into the flour, and hydrochloric acid into the water, used for the manufacture of bread, Dr. Dauglish's "patent" forces water charged with carbonic acid gas into the flour, the two ingredients being rapidly mixed by the aid of steam in a manner that dispenses with the laborious process of kneading. One of the *fanciful* objections to bread made with yeast arises from the fact that it contains the smallest conceivable amount of the alcohol, formed by the fermentation of that portion of the starch which is converted into glucose. But the amount of alcohol in yeast-bread is so trivial, that the teetotaler may eat the old-fashioned food with an easy



conscience. Some years since, when an unsuccessful company worked a process for catching the alcohol evolved from fermented bread whilst in the oven, its method was misrepresented to the populace as a nefarious plan for *extracting* alcohol from bread, and so depriving the consumer of a certain quantity of spirit. "Bread sold here with the gin in it," was the announcement placarded at the bakers' shops that opposed most vigorously this insidious attempt to "rob a poor man"—of his gin.

By the way, whilst Yorkshire is glorious for its baked batter puddings, East Anglia is famous for two kinds of farinaceous food that may be rated as breads. The *heavy* Suffolk dumpling is unleavened, and the *light* Norfolk dumpling is leavened, bread, cooked in the boiler instead of the oven. In his "Grand Dictionnaire," Alexandre Dumas makes a droll mistake, where he says, "*Dumpling de Norfolk*. Ce mets qui a l'honneur de devoir son nom au duc de Norfolk, lequel l'affectionnait beaucoup, se fait de la façon suivante ; vous mettez dans une pâte un peu épaisse un grand verre de lait, deux œufs et un peu de sel, faites la cuire deux ou trois minutes dans de l'eau bien bouillante, jetez égoutter sur un tamis, et servez avec du beurre frais un peu salé."

Perhaps no gastronomic writer ever made a droller blunder than this account of the Norfolk dumpling, which only differs from the Suffolk

“damper” in being made with yeast. Of course, the yeast dumpling swells greatly in boiling, a fact that has occasioned comical mishaps. Many years since, when Monsieur de Rouillon, a French émigré of ancient nobility, had just settled at Norwich, where he was for many years an eminent Professor of French, his young bride decided to give him the provincial dumpling for his dinner. In her ignorance of the creature’s habit, and in the absence of a larger boiler in her poorly furnished kitchen, Madame boiled her dumpling in a big kettle, from which it could be only extracted by means of a Cæsarian operation.

Though rye-bread was thought hurtful to weak stomachs, the author of “The Haven of Health” says it was much eaten in the rural districts; and he observes that familiar experience in Lancashire, Cheshire, Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Cornwall contradicts Galen’s assertion that oats, though fit for beasts, were no fit diet for men. Cogan, by the way, recommends dyspeptical persons to spice their breads with caraway and fennel seeds. Hence, it appears, the inventor of the Abernethy biscuit had Elizabethan authority for the medicinal ingredient of his unleavened cake.

Though the Old English were poorly supplied with vegetables, their destitution in this respect was far less complete than several historians have repre-

sented. Harrison was not without grounds for his opinion that horticulture languished during the century following Henry the Fourth's accession. The civil convulsions, which repressed literature and impoverished every order of men, were highly prejudicial to the luxurious and refining pursuits. Not more injurious to the families which joined in the universal strife, than to the art which furnished the contendants with the fairest emblems of their mutual enmity, the Wars of *Roses* deprived manners of their civility, and robbed the soil of all labour that was not requisite for the production of the bare necessities of life. Rudeness invaded the table, and weeds covered the gardens, which had been prolific of the choicer fruits and vegetables mentioned in the "Forme of Cury." But even in the hardest times of the fifteenth century our ancestors had their watercresses and rampions, their rapes and turnip-tops, their dandelions and common spinaches, their coarse gourds and cabbages, and the dozens of wild herbs which, though they fell into disesteem soon after the introduction of the American potato and Italian broccoli, were long valued as wholesome and palatable materials for the pot. It is absurd to infer from the loose statements of careless writers, that the chief lady of Henry the Eighth's England could not get a mess of green esculents without sending to Antwerp or

Rotterdam for them. Yet the sceptical Hume could on no better authority assert, "It was not till the end of the reign of Henry the Eighth that any salads, carrots, turnips, or other edible roots were produced in England; the little of these vegetables that were used was imported from Holland and Flanders. Queen Catherine, when she wanted a salad, was obliged to send a messenger thither on purpose." The tradition, accepted thus literally and used so strangely by the historian, may have originated in the fact that, in the dearth of certain materials for a salad, and in the absence of some new vegetables, the royal lady imported from the Low Countries a supply of herbs and roots for plantation in her gardens. Such a circumstance would have afforded a smart talker the occasion for declaring that her Highness, unable to pick a salad in all England, was compelled to send across the sea for one. But it is preposterous to imagine that she was ever in such straits for a dish of green meat as Hume would have us think.

The tastes and habits of the table are not quickly formed by an entire people. In Elizabeth's time our ancestors' fondness for vegetables amounted almost to a passion, and caused them to welcome every addition to their supply of roots and herbal esculents. The alacrity with which they adopted the American tuber, which, in course of time, pro-

duced deplorable results in the history of Ireland, is significant of a gastronomic preference that could not have developed itself in some sixty years. Eleven years had not elapsed since Raleigh's adventurers brought our first potatoes from Virginia before they were commonly grown and eaten in this country. In 1697, Gerarde could write of potatoes as familiar fare. At the same time our forefathers ate tulip-roots (dressed with sugar), radishes, pumpkins, artichokes, Jerusalem artichokes, fourteen kinds of colewort, "including the colie-flore or cole-flore, and the great ordinarie cabbage, commonly eaten all over this kingdome," Peruvian potatoes, Virginian potatoes, cucumbers, carrots, parsnips, turnips, broccoli, beet, asparagus, onions, together with other good vegetables. They had also their lettuces, spinaches, cresses, and a score other esculent leaves for hot and cold salads, of which further mention will be made. Whatever the dearth of vegetables in Henry's time, it had completely disappeared in Elizabeth's days.

Cogan thought radishes "unwholesome any way," but he records that they were eaten largely by his countrymen, as a sauce, with roast mutton and other meats. Gerarde observes that they may be eaten raw with bread. The precise way in which Curius Dentatus dressed them in the presence of the Samnite ambassadors, is one of those facts



about which history is silent. Probably the frugal Roman was preparing them with oil, and would not have addressed the embassy with so rough a tongue, had he first smoothed it with the mess. Speaking of parsnips and carrots, Cogan tells us to boil and butter them, "especially parsnips." The Elizabethan housekeeper who grudged butter for the parsnips which she set before her guests, gained an ill name. However smooth her tongue, she could not palliate her parsimony with pleasant speeches. "Apologies," says the Elizabethan adage, "won't butter parsnips." Potatoes were also dressed profusely with butter. Cucumber has an ill name for indigestibility; but whilst Cogan, ever quick to discover unwholesomeness in food, recommends us to sauce our mutton in the Summer with peppered slices of the fruit, Gerarde extols cucumber pottage, thickened with oatmeal, as a remedial diet for persons afflicted with "flegme and copper-faces, red and shining fierie noses (as red as red roses), with pimples, pumples, rubies, and such-like precious faces."

The English have at all times been large consumers of pulse. The compilers of the "Forme of Cury" used beans and peas, new and old, in their soups and hotch-potches; and in later times the demand for early peas in the London market caused them to be sold at prices that scandalized

careful housekeepers. In the middle of the seventeenth century the keeper of an eating-house, near the Savoy, offered ten shillings for a peck and a half of green peas (unshelled), which a poor woman was carrying to the Protector Cromwell's lady, in the hope that she would receive a much larger sum for the first fruits of her pea-garden. The poor woman was disappointed. Elizabeth Cromwell had a passion for new peas; but, like a dame of inferior degree and more recent time, she was frugal, even when bent on pleasure. Accepting the "present," Mistress Cromwell sent the "giver" a crown-piece, which the latter indignantly declined to accept. A lively dispute ensued between the lady's-maid and the market-woman, which ended in the restoration of the peas, that were forthwith sold for an angel in the Strand. "And so," says the author of Elizabeth Cromwell's "Court and Kitchen" (1664), "half-slightingly, and half-ashamedly, this great lady returns the present, putting it off with a censure upon the unsatisfactory daintiness of luxurious and prodigal epicurisme. The very same were afterwards sold by the woman to the said cook, who is yet alive to justify the truth of this relation." What stronger evidence of the story's truth can be required by the impartial reader?

Following an Apician precept, our ancestors

brightened the greenness of their young peas by boiling them in water strongly seasoned with saltpetre. Albert Smith, in one of his jest-books, advised the cook who would give her peas a fine colour to send them to Hammersmith, for that was the way to Turnham Green; a flippancy, by-the-by, for which Albert was indebted to Oliver Goldsmith, who gave the same order for the treatment of pickles.

Not more delicious to the palate, than hateful for the smell which it imparts to the breath, the onion has always been a source of doubt and difficulty to the fastidious epicure. Whether he regards leek or chive, garlic or shallot, onion or scallion, he vacillates between love and detestation, and doubts whether he should bless or curse a thing so exquisite in fruition, and execrable in consequences. His usual course is to humour his appetite, and then to avoid the ladies, till he has paid the full penalty of indulgence. It is so now; and was so in ancient Rome. Martial wrote,

“Fila Tarentini graviter redolentia porri,  
Edisti quoties, oscula clausa dato.”

“The juice of leeks who fondly sips,  
To kiss the fair must close his lips.”

Brummell the Beau, who *once* ate a pea, was once present at a vehement disputation on the delicate

question, whether a gentleman might eat onions immediately before going into the company of gentlewomen. The discussion took place at a time when the "Sublime Steaks" were in their palmiest days, and the feebler dandies wanted courage to decry the strong-smelling bulbs beloved by beef-eaters. Brummell at first kept silence, only evincing his disgust at the vulgar topic by expressive grimaces; but on being pressed for his opinion, he remarked sententiously, "No man is so well-looking and fascinating that, on entering a ball-room, he can afford to handicap himself with a stink."

For centuries the English epicure had been satisfied with the small and comparatively flavourless onion of his native soil, when his happiness was enlarged by the introduction of the far finer bulb of France. This momentous event in our gastronomic annals was attended with humorous circumstances. Corbière, the French naval novelist, was staying at the small port of Roscoff when he received a visit from a compatriot, whom he had never seen before, and who entered his presence without any letter of introduction. A sea-faring man, he had a title to M. Corbière's sympathy. He was also a merchant-adventurer, who combined the tradesman's shrewdness with the sailor's frankness. His brow betokened intelligence and courage, whilst his

Herculean stature and vast shoulders afforded a spectacle that stirred his beholder's heart with patriotic emotion. To M. Corbière's inquiry for his visitor's purpose, the man answered, "Sir, I am about to make a voyage on important business to London, where I shall find myself in a land of whose language I am entirely ignorant. In order that I may transact my affairs, tell me the English of these words, 'L'oignon Anglais n'est pas bon.'"

"Surely I will do so. In English they are 'The English onion is not good.'" To impress them fully on his visitor's mind, M. Corbière repeated the words several times.

"Sir," entreated the Roscovite, "have the great goodness to write them on a slip of paper."

When M. Corbière had done so the man of sea and commerce took his writing and his departure. A week later the stupendous man and small adventurer was in the port of London, with his boat laden with French onions. On the following day he took his stand at a corner of Covent Garden Market amidst goodly piles of his best bulbs, over which was exhibited a placard bearing the words, "The English Onion Is Not Good." A crowd quickly gathered round the foreigner, who, to all remarks thrown at him, replied with equal good temper and gravity, "De Inglees on-i-on ees not good." This steadily reiterated announcement provoked the



anger, without lessening the curiosity of a crowd, more remarkable for prejudice against foreigners than for courtesy to anyone. "What do you mean, you *parlez-vooing* thief? Do you mean to insult England?" exclaimed a furious costermonger, who again received the reply, "*De Inglees on-i-on ees not good.*" "Do you want to fight?" roared the orator of an affronted people. Again, for the hundredth time, came the answer, "*De Inglees on-i-on ees not good.*" "Look here," screamed the costermonger, "*parlez-voo* in that way again, and I'll give you more *Inglees on-i-on* than you'll stomach. Do you hear, Froggy?" Bent on making himself intelligible to a dull people, the Roscovite began to say once more "*De Inglees on-i——*" when the costermonger ran in upon him. In an instant the assailant was caught by the elbow, and sent spinning round and round like a top. The hum of riot and street-fight arose. Maddened by the repulse which he had endured, the costermonger rushed on his prodigious foe, who raised him in his arms, and then threw him flat on the ground, face and belly downwards. A yell rose from all the spectators, some of whom had enough French to inform the Roscovite that in England he must throw his man on the back and shoulders, with face upwards. Returning to the attack, the Englishman sprung at the traducer of the British onion, when he was

again caught up and thrown, but this time on his shoulders, according to the insular "*règles de la lutte*." When the same feat had been repeated till the assailant cried "Enough, enough!" there arose "*hourras!*" and "*les bravos!*" from the English spectators, who, after the wont of their countrymen, could appreciate merit demonstrated thus cogently by physical force. In their delight with the gallant Roscovite, they were about to carry him in triumph round the "Garden," when he exclaimed in French, "Not so, not so. While you are carrying me in triumph you will steal my onions." On learning his apprehension, through an interpreter, the by-standers put an end to the hero's suspicions by buying all his onions at his own price; and then they "chaired him" and "cheered him" round the market. From that day the English market has been open to French onions, forty cargoes of which are annually sent to London from the single port of Roscoff. Does the reader question the historic accuracy of this story? He will dismiss the ungenerous doubt on learning that the anecdote is given on the authority of Alexandre Dumas. An unfortunate fact for this story, and the credit of M. Dumas, is that onions were largely imported to this country from France and Spain in the seventeenth century. In his "*Acetaria; A Discourse of Sallets*," John Evelyn says of onions, "The best are

such as are brought us out of Spain, whence they of St. Omers had them, and some that have weighed eight pounds.”

Whatever the defects of the English onion, it is universally conceded that our mushrooms are good when gathered with care and treated skilfully. Nor can it be questioned that they were largely eaten by our ancestors of the Roman period, who adopted the cuisine of their conquerors. To die of bad mushrooms is not an heroic way of quitting life, but it was through a dish of poisonous fungi, administered treacherously by his niece and fourth wife, Agrippina, that the Emperor Claudius went to the unseen world. What troubled the Roman wits chiefly in this affair was their inability to discover, for their own safety and the good of all epicures, the particular species of fungus that killed this wearer of the purple. Similar “accidents” may have decided our mediæval ancestors to relinquish a practice taken from the Romans, and, in their inability to distinguish clearly between good and noxious fungi, to neglect the mushroom altogether. Anyhow, our edible fungi were regarded with wholesome suspicion, if not with universal abhorrence, in the earlier part of our Tudor time, and the fashion of eating them did not revive till that period was drawing to a close. After glancing at the new vegetables of his day, Harrison says of their eaters,

“Neither doo they now staie with such of these fruits as are wholesome in their kinds, but adventure further upon such as are verie dangerous and hurtful as the verangenes, mushrooms, &c.” In the middle of the following century Edmund Gayton wrote against mushrooms,

“Pepper and oyl and salt, nay all cook’s art,  
Can no way wholesomeness to them impart,  
What Dr. Butler said of the cucumber,  
Of these ground-bucklers we the same aver,  
Dress them with care, then to the dung-hill throw ’um,  
A hog won’t touch ’um if he rightly knowe ’um !”

Dr. Glynn of Cambridge — a far later medical celebrity than Dr. Butler—used to say that to be rightly dressed, a cucumber should be sliced into very thin slices, sprinkled with the finest oil, peppered plentifully, covered fairly with vinegar, and then—thrown out of the window. But the pleasantry, with which the Cambridge physician has been credited in medical “ana,” was at best only a curious refinement on Dr. Butler’s order to the same end.

The Duke of Newcastle, whose fame has been rendered ludicrous to all posterity by Horace Walpole’s pen, was liable to panics; and, in a sudden alarm about mushrooms, he issued an order that Gayton would have cordially approved, for the immediate and complete destruction of all mushrooms

and toadstools, and all other fungi whatsoever discoverable in Claremont Park. His incomparable cook, Chloe, went nearly mad at the prompt and thorough execution of this whimsical ukase. "Poor Dr. Shaw," says the malicious Walpole, mistelling the story, partly out of carelessness, but chiefly with the design of rendering the Duke more ridiculous, "being sent for in great haste to Claremont (it seems the Duchess had caught a violent cold by a hair of her whisker getting up her nose, and making her sneeze), the poor Doctor, I say, having eaten a few mushrooms before he set out, was taken so ill that he was forced to stop at Kingston, and, being carried to the first apothecary's, prescribed a medicine for himself which immediately cured him. This catastrophe so alarmed the Duke of Newcastle that he immediately ordered all the mushroom-beds to be destroyed, and even the toadstools in the park did not escape scalping in this general measure. And a voice of lamentation was heard at Ramah in Claremont—'Chloe' weeping for her mushrooms, and they are not." Instead of eating them before the journey from town to Claremont, Dr. Shaw took the mushrooms which caused his indisposition immediately before the homeward journey. The meal that occasioned the physician's attack was eaten under the Duke's roof, and Chloe's mushroom-beds were destroyed because there was conclusive proof



that some of her mushrooms had done the mischief. His Grace was not a wise man, but he was not so foolish as to demolish his own mushrooms because the doctor had eaten some indigestible fungi in London.

Gayton made a trip in saying that a hog would decline to eat mushrooms, "if he rightly knew them." The gluttonous propensities, always conspicuous in pigs, are combined with a considerable discernment of flavours, that comes into operation as soon as the animals are in position to choose their own food and eat daintily. Unclean beasts, able to relish anything, they also exhibit strong gastronomic preferences; and they devour the more delicate and odorous of the fungoid growths with an avidity which goes some way to prove their kinship to epicures of our own species. With his delicate nerves of smell, the hog is no less quick and sure than the truffle-terrier in detecting the scent of the subterranean truffle; and in some districts he guides the truffle-hunter to the delicacy which Brillat-Savarin justly styled "*le diamant de la cuisine*."

This elegant tribute to the virtues of the truffle should not be mentioned without a passing allusion to the baneful properties of the esculent which has been known to destroy abruptly those whom it has fascinated for a few brief minutes. Even as a youth with weak lungs should refrain from the

violent excitement of rowing, the epicure of weak stomach should avoid the perilous delight of the truffle-gourmand. Together with many votaries the truffle has had several victims. If Claudius died of mushrooms, it must be recorded of the Duc d'Escars, Louis the Eighteenth's superb Grand-Maître d'Hôtel, that he was killed by *truffes à la purée d'ortolans*. The duke and his royal master had laboured, and enjoyed their labour's proper reward, for several hours in that strict privacy which often guarded their gastronomic inquiries and pleasures from vulgar observation. With their own hands they had prepared the fatal compound; and having eaten it with unqualified satisfaction, they had retired to rest with easy consciences. A few hours later, Louis le Désiré was roused from his tranquil slumber to be informed that his faithful *maître-d'hôtel* was already in the arms of death. The expiring duke had despatched a timely warning to his master, in order that the King might avoid disaster by prompt measures. Betraying an heroic conviction of his own safety, and a royal freedom from emotional weakness, the sovereign observed, "Dying! and of my *truffes à la purée*? Poor man! Then he sees I did him no injustice. I always said I had the better stomach of the two."

No vegetable is at the same time so fruitful of delight and so innocuous as asparagus—the Aspara-

gus Sativus of botanists, and "the grass" or "sparrow-grass" of the London fruiterers. The only discordant note that disturbs the music of its harmonious story comes from the controversy whether its tender heads should be dressed with oil or butter. Fontenelle and the Abbé Terrasson were close friends to the last; but to the last they differed on this important point, Fontenelle insisting on oil, and Terrasson declaring no less firmly for butter. One day the Abbé dropt in to dine with the poet, when the latter had just received a superb basket of asparagus. With proper regard for his friend's taste, and a noble sacrifice of his own feelings, the poet ordered his cook to dress one half of the asparagus with butter, and the rest with oil. This direction having been given, the friends composed themselves for chat till the repast should be served. Half-an-hour later, when the Abbé was in the act of uttering a pleasantry, he fell back in his chair, and died instantly of a stroke of apoplexy. With admirable presence of mind, before he despatched his valet for a physician, Fontenelle opened the door of his cabinet and called to his cook, "*Tout à l'huile maintenant; tout à l'huile,*"—"All with oil, now; all with oil."

Fontenelle and the advocates of oil had ancient usage on their side. Terrasson was the champion of a novelty. In Elizabethan England, asparagus

when served separately, was always dressed with oil. In "The Herbal," John Gerarde says of this vegetable, "It is named asparagus, of the excellency, because asparagi doth properly signify the first spring or sprout of every plant, especially when it is tender, and before it do grow into an hard stalk, as are the buds, or young springs of wild vine or hops, or such like." Richardson doubts whether he should agree with Varro in thinking the word a derivative "*ex asperis virgultis*," or with Lennep, who derived it from "*a priv.* and *σπαρυσσεν*, to tear to pieces." Gerarde goes on to say, "The first sprouts and tender shoots hereof be oftentimes sodden in flesh-broth and eaten; or boiled in faire water, and seasoned with oile, vinegar, and pepper, they are served up as a salad." But such large asparagus—with thick, stringy stalks, and heads bigger than filbert-nuts,—as is now-a-days sold in every fruiterer's shop during the season for the vegetable, was unknown in Elizabethan times. "Manured or garden sperage," says Gerarde, "hath at his first rising out of the ground thicke tender shoots, very soft and brittle, of the thicknesse of the greatest swan's quill, in taste like the green bean, have at top a certain scaly soft bud." And so long as the finest asparagus sticks were no larger than swan's quills, our ancestors ate the stalks (*green in*

those days) as well as the heads of the tender vegetable.

The practice of setting asparagus deep in the soil of highly-earthed beds, and subsequently covering the beds with dry litter,—a practice which, without improving the flavour, changed so greatly the outward appearance of the growth,—became general in the early years of the eighteenth century. The date of this horticultural change can be fixed with sufficient exactness by some pleasant anecdotes.

Smarting under adverse circumstances and real or imaginary indignities, which wrought permanent injury to his moral nature, young Jonathan Swift was acting as Sir William Temple's private secretary when he encountered William the Third at Moorpark. Whilst Sir William was confined to his bed with gout, the sovereign inspected his host's beautiful gardens, and graciously taught the poor scholar, who officiated as his guide round the grounds, "how to cut asparagus in the Dutch way." Swift had occasion also to see the king eat asparagus.

More than half-a-century had passed since this meeting of the great king and the great humourist, and Swift, who died in 1745, was lying in his grave in St. Patrick's Cathedral, when Leland, the historian, and George Faulkner, the Dublin alderman and bookseller, met at a dinner-table where the talk turned on the famous Dean. During this gossip



Faulkner, who had repeatedly printed and published for Swift, recalled an occasion when he had dined at the Dean's table in his deanery. The publisher having been detained for some time at the deanery on business connected with some proof-sheets, the man of letters had pressed him to dine with him *tête-à-tête*. Asparagus was one of the vegetables at the repast; and when the guest asked for a second helping of the fare, the frugal host, pointing to the applicant's plate, observed, "Sir, first finish what you have upon your plate." "What, Sir?" answered the man of business, "eat my stalks?" "Ay, Sir," the Dean responded in his most imperious manner; "eat your stalks, or you will have no more. King William always ate his stalks." Whereupon the man of business, yielding to a will stronger than his own, ate his stalks submissively, whilst his cynical host doubtless chuckled secretly at another exhibition of a free-man's servility. "And George," exclaimed Leland with astonishment, when Faulkner had given this illustration of Swift's insolence and his own meekness, "what! were you really blockhead enough to obey him?" "Yes," Faulkner replied, bridling up and flushing angrily, "and, Doctor, if you had dined with Dean Swift *tête-à-tête*, faith, you would have been obliged to eat your stalks too!"

Sir Walter Scott tript in saying that William the

Third taught Swift "how to eat the vegetables with Dutch economy," implying thereby that the slender green stalks eaten by the king were no daintier meat than such thick stringy stalks as the novelist's readers habitually put aside. The fact is, whilst little inferior in texture, the lower part of the green stalk is even superior in flavour to the head of the vegetable, when grown in the old fashion. A chronic invalid always under medical care, even when he fought his battles, William of Orange was not likely to load his stomach with a lot of indigestible white stalks. But new horticulture had made asparagus-stalks uneatable, before a load of them was forced down his obsequious publisher's throat by the whimsical misanthrope, whose biography abounds with instances of the morbid delight he took in putting outrageous affronts on his social inferiors, and seeing to what depths of self-humiliation he could goad them.

The literature of gastronomy affords at least a score of apocryphal, and extremely improbable asparagus stories, which make fun of persons so simple as to imagine that the white stalks were the eatable part of a dish of asparagus. One tells how "a wag" (that supreme social nuisance of our Georgian period), sitting down with a "countryman" to a plate of asparagus, said, "Come, I am not hungry, so I'll cut, and you shall choose," dividing

with his knife, as he spoke, the heads from the stalks. Of course the simple and greedy "countryman" seized the larger portion. Another tells how a bundle of the new (!) vegetable was sent in George the Third's time from London to a "country" lady, who was cautioned in a note to "cut off the heads and throw away what was uneatable." Misconstruing the instructions, the old-fashioned matron threw away the heads, and nearly killed herself by eating the stalks. A third anecdote certifies that a worthy woman of the same recent period, living in the heart of Somersetshire, chopped up several pounds of the stringy stalks, dressed them with melted butter and pepper, and then, having eaten them, observed that "she did not think much of the *new* vegetable." The originators of such tales were drolly ignorant of the plant's history. A vegetable, commonly grown in our Elizabethan gardens, can have been no novelty to our rudest housekeepers of Georgian times. It is not likely that "country" people were less ignorant of the "grass" than town-folk. And even whilst the modern way of growing it was a novelty, the rustic gourmand cannot have needed instruction that the green head was more agreeable than the white stalk.

Far different from these foolish anecdotes is the story told by Brillat-Savarin of the asparagus that raised its head once upon a time in the garden of

Monseigneur Courtois de Quincey, Bishop of Belley. The Bishop was extremely fond of the vegetable, and evinced significant delight on hearing that a head of unusual size had appeared just above the surface of his asparagus-bed. To ascertain the truth of the news, the most reverend Monseigneur hastened, with a party of familiar friends, to the spot where this marvel could be seen. The report was true. The delicately-painted and shining head was wonderfully large. A new animation pervaded the Bishop's residence. His superb head of asparagus was the talk of all Belley and the surrounding country. Day after day he visited it with his guests, marking its gradual ascent from the bed. At last the moment arrived when, in the presence of a dozen agitated spectators, the Bishop, knife in hand, stooped and put the blade's edge to the delicate production. Alas ! the knife could not cut it. The vegetable was a thing of wood, which some malicious mechanic had carved, painted, and planted. Amongst the witnesses of this comical scene was the Canon Rosset, the irrepressible smile of whose humorous face betrayed that he was the perpetrator of the jest. After the lapse of two generations this ludicrous incident afforded a Parisian confectioner the suggestion for those imitations of asparagus, in cream-ice and water-ice, that are sometimes served at London dinner-tables.

When Brillat-Savarin expressed his surprise to Madame Chevet, of the Palais Royal, that she could find purchasers of asparagus at the price of forty francs a bundle, and presumed that such costly luxuries went only to the king's palace or the hotels of princes, she told the epicure he was in error, and enlightened him with piquant words. Princes would buy the *beautiful*, but they were slow to spend money on the *magnificent*. Her costliest dainties were consumed by private persons, and left her hands more quickly than cheaper goods. Even whilst she spoke, Paris contained some three hundred men of money—financiers, capitalists, contractors—confined to their rooms by gout, fear of cold, the doctor's orders, and other causes, which did not prevent them from eating. Sitting over his fire, each one of these was racking his brain to imagine the delicacy most fit to revive his jaded appetite, and, after wearying himself with vain endeavours to settle the question, would send out his valet to make observations. The valet would visit her window, see the parcel of asparagus at forty francs, and return with an account of its magnificence. Ten minutes later it would be sold at full price. Or a newly-married husband, passing the shop with his "jolie petite femme" on his arm, would buy the bundle at her request. Anyhow, the thing being rare and highly expensive, it would be sold to some



one. The epicure was still gossiping with Madame Chevet, when two stout Englishmen rolled up to the shop, saw the prize, and desired it. Another minute had not passed before one of the islanders had paid his forty francs, put the bundle under his arm, and carried it off, singing triumphantly his national anthem, “sifflant l’air, God save the king.” What a patriotic fellow was “the Englishman abroad,” some fifty years since, that he could not buy a bundle of asparagus without praying for his sovereign’s safety, or a basket of peaches without humming “Rule Britannia!” Now-a-days he would buy the whole of the Palais Royal without condescending to hum even an opera air.

Madame Chevet’s evidence respecting the Paris of her time might be applied to the London of to-day. The social explorer would not find our most luxurious tables in the houses of our princes. In England, the lavish epicure is more often a man of the people than of the *noblesse*. When difficulties were rapidly growing upon him and stopping the road to preferment, Serjeant Wilkins—that best of advocates for a common jury in a horse-case—thought nothing of a couple of guineas for a luncheon to his taste. And having eaten at his midday repast a couple of bundles of asparagus, at half-a-guinea a bundle, he would qualify this “food for the brain” by drinking a pint or two of heavy

London stout, to bring his intellect down to the level of the British jury. In "The Princess Clarisse," one of Mr. Mortimer Collins's clever novels, Sir Clare says, "Liebig, or some other scientist, maintains that asparagein, the alkaloid in asparagus, develops form in the human brain; so if you get hold of an artistic child and give it plenty of asparagus, it will develop into a Rafaele."

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE SALAD.

A good salad is the prologue to a bad supper.  
 He would live for aye must eat sallet in May,  
 A fool can pick a sallet as well as a wiser man.

ENGLISH PROVERBS.

“Four persons are wanted to make a good salad, a spendthrift for oil, a miser for vinegar, a counsellor for salt, and a madman to stir all up.”—SPANISH PROVERB.

“Lettuse is much used in salets in the sommer tyme with vinegar, oyle, and sugar and salt, and is formed to procure appetite for meate, and to temper the heate of the stomach and liver.”—COGAN’S “HAVEN OF HEALTH.”

TOWARDS the close of a long and honourable life, John Evelyn produced the “*Acetaria: a Discourse of Sallets*,” which he dedicated to Lord Chancellor Somers. The subject, which the diarist treated in a separate work, demands at least a chapter in this survey of the English table.

The Romans were great salad-eaters, and in the “*De Opsoniis*” may be found brief directions for the sauces proper for their common salads. In default of lettuces, they ate endives (flavoured with finely minced onion), which they dressed in the spring with liquamen and oil, and in the winter with honey and vinegar. Their salads of lettuces were

dressed with liquamen and vinegar, or with an oxyporon composed of cummin, ginger, green-rue, nitre, dates, pepper, and honey. But whilst eating lettuce with great gust, the Romans questioned its wholesomeness, and after taking a salad would sometimes correct its hurtful influence by drinking half a cochlearium of oxyporon, mixed with a little vinegar and liquamen. If the meat had occasioned inconvenience, the remedy was nicely calculated to complete the mischief.

The earlier of the old Romans used to close their meals with salad ; but in Martial's time it was usual to eat the green food at the beginning of a repast. He says :—

“Claudere quæ cœnas Lactuca solebat avorum,  
Dic mihi, cur nostras incohat illa dapes?”

Englished in Gerarde's “Herbal,”

“Tell me, why Lettuce, which our grandsires last did eate,  
Is now of late become to be first of meat?”

Like the Romans of Martial's time, our ancestors, from the feudal days to the eighteenth century, regarded the salad as a prelude to the heavier dishes of a banquet. Whilst Harrison, Cogan and Gerarde remark on this fashion of the English table in Elizabeth's time, culinary authors of the seventeenth century show that the practice of serving green-meat *before* flesh or fish was maintained throughout

the Stuart period. "A boyled sallet of herbs or carrots" appears in the first course of one of John Murrell's Lenten menus (A D. 1630.) Giles Rose served "salats" in "the entry" of his banquets. Like the Romans, also, the Old English maintained that the *raw* salad was more pleasant than digestible, some of their gastronomic authorities even going so far as to denounce it as highly prejudicial to health. John Russell was one of these slanderers of an especially wholesome diet. In the "Boke of Nurture," he says,

"beware of saladis, grene metis, and of frutes rawe,  
for bey make many a man have a feeble mawe,  
perfore, of suche fresch lustes set not an hawe,  
For such wantoun appetites ar not worth a strawe:"

a foolish opinion that reappears in the prose of "The Boke of Kervynge," which says, "Beware of greene sallettes and rawe fruytes, for they wyll make your sourayne seke." Even Gerarde, writing in a time when the beneficial effect of salad on bodies suffering from the salt diet of winter was universally recognized, advises that instead of being "eaten raw with vinegar, oil, and a little salt," lettuce should be "boiled," in order that it may be "sooner digested, and nourish more." For the same reason, Cogan commends boiled lettuce and boiled cucumber. Richard the Second's physicians do not appear to have held the raw salad in high esteem; for the



subject is dismissed in the "Forme of Cury" with a single receipt, which runs thus:—"Take parsley, sage, garlic, young onions, onions, leek, borage, myntes, porrectes, fenel, and cresses, rue, rosemary, purslain; lave and wash them clean; pick them, pluck them small with thine hand, and mix them well with raw oil. Flavour with vinegar and salt."

But whilst princes and lords, with an abundant supply of game and fresh flesh during the winter, avoided the salad as indigestible, the commonalty, who subsisted chiefly in the same season on salted provisions, learnt from experience that no food was more quickly remedial of the eruptive diseases and other inconveniences that result from a diet of powdered meat, without fresh vegetables. The wealthy could afford to disdain raw leaves as meat fit only for the rabble; but the commonalty ran to green stuff, and devoured it with equal avidity and thankfulness, as soon as spring had clothed hill-side and hedge-row with the leaves that were at the same time food and physic for the disordered body. The salad of leaves abounds in vestiges of mediæval pharmacy. Indeed, it was the old medicine for the million, which they took daily in the spring season, "as the occasion required," till the garden and orchard had once again brought forth their annual tribute of delicious fare. Whilst the herb doctors

prescribed the Spring salad for the sick, folk-lore extolled it as a preventive of disease and decay.

Poetry seized the dish to use it as an emblem of vernal freshness and greenness. Shakespeare's Cleopatra says :—

“ My salad days,  
When I was green in judgment.”

In “ All's Well that Ends Well,” the poet gives the following conversation :—

*Lafeu.* 'Twas a good lady, 'twas a good lady; we may pick a thousand salads, ere we light on such another herb.

*Clown.* Indeed, Sir, she was the sweet marjoram of the salad, or rather the herb of grace.

*Lafeu.* They are not salad-herbs, you knave, they are nose-herbs.

*Clown.* I am no great Nebuchadnezzar, Sir, I have not much skill in grass.

In “ King Henry VI.,” Cade says, “ Wherefore, on a brick wall I climbed into this garden, to see if I can eat grass, or pick a sallet another while, which is not amiss to cool man's stomach this hot weather. And, I think, this word sallet was born to do me good; for many a time but for sallet, my brain-pan had been cleft with a brown bill; and, many a time, when I have been dry, and bravely marching, it hath served me instead of a quart-pot to drink on; and now the word sallet must serve me to feed on.”

Gerarde's lists of garden-growths and simples,

good for salads, comprised:—1. The Spanish nut, “a kind of Floure de Luce.” 2. Onions. 3. Leeks. 4. Chives. 5. Garlic. 6. Turnip-tops. 7. Winter-cresses. 8. Rocket. 9. Tarragon. 10. Other cresses. 11. Garden succorie. 12. Dandelion leaves. 13. Endive. 14. Lettuces of the garden. 15. Wild lettuces. 16. Beets, leaves and root. 17. Spinach. 18. Orach. 19. Dock-leaves. 20. Sorrel. 21. Roots of Rampions. 22. Lesser houseleeks, or prick-madams. 23. Purslane. 24. Sampier leaves. 25. Water-cresses. 26. Brook-lime, or water pimpnel. 27. Borage. 28. Bugloss leaves. 29. Hops, the buds or first sprouts. 30. Garden-burnet. 31. Leaves of musk-roses. 32. Rosemary. Most of these materials for the salad-bowl either had, or were believed to have, medical properties that made them highly salutary in the Spring season; and some of them were prescribed separately by the herb-doctors, as specifics for certain maladies of the stomach and skin. Thus the cresses, lettuce, brook-lime, and the “grass,” which takes its special name (scurvy-grass) from the disease which it was supposed to cure, are commended by Elizabethan botanists for being “good against the scurvy.” Onions, leeks, and chives expelled ill-humours from the system, and stimulated certain organs that suffer quickly from a diet of salted provisions. Tarragon aided the medicinal virtues of lettuce. Dandelion

leaves quickened the sluggish liver. Spinach, dock-leaves, sorrell, sampier leaves, borage leaves, and bugloss leaves, cooled the stomach. Rampion roots cured "heat of the mouth." Lesser house-leeks and purslane were efficacious in grievous affections, often provoked by a too saline diet, deficient in fresh vegetables. Besides aiding the stomach, borage-flowers and bugloss-leaves acted directly on the heart, and caused lightness of spirits. Hop-buds were excellently stomachic. Garden-burnet "made the heart merry and glad." Rosemary strengthened the memory. "Leaves of musk-roses, eaten in the morning, in manner of a sallad, with oyle, vinegar, and pepper," were regarded by Gerarde as a highly efficacious medicine for certain kinds of dyspepsia.

Taught by the doctors to think boiled leaves more digestible than raw leaves, our cooks in the earlier half of the seventeenth century often boiled their salads; and whilst this practice prevailed, a mess of boiled green vegetables, such as a dish of spinach, was commonly called a salad, though set scalding hot on the table. For instance, John Murrell (1630), gives the following directions for "Divers Sallets Boyled. Parboile spinage, and chop it fine, with the edges of two hard trenchers upon a board or the backs of two choppin-knives; then set them on a chafin-dish of coales with butter and

vinegar. Season it with cinnamon, ginger, sugar, and a few parboyld currans. Then cut hard eggs into quarters to garnish it withall, and serve it upon sippets. So you may serve burrage, buglass, endive, suckory, coleflowers, corell, marygold leaves, water-cresses, leekes, onyons, sparragus, rocket, alexanders. Parboyle them and season them all alike; whether it be with oyle and vinegar, or butter and vinegar, or cinnamon, ginger, sugar and butter; eggs are necessary, or at least very good for all boyled sallets." Mallow-leaves were boiled tender and served in the same way. Dishes of roots, boiled and buttered, were also called sallets. One reads in the seventeenth century cookery-books of sallets of carrots, and sallets of buttered parsnips. For "a sallet of burdock roots," John Murrell gives the following orders, "Cut off the outward rinde, and lay them in water a good houre at the least; when you have done, seeth them until they be tender; then set them on coales with butter and vinegar, and so let them stand a pretty while; then put in grated bread and sugar betwixt every layer and serve them." At present, such a mess of boiled roots and bread-crumbs would be more likely to be called a pudding than a salad.

Cowslip-salad, made of cowslip-blossoms mixed with vinegar and sugar, is still sometimes eaten by



country-children in the nursery, as a relish with bread-and-butter; but in Charles the First's time, cowslips, violets, roses, and other flowers were dressed in the same way for the dining-room.

At the same time the grand salad of a ceremonious banquet was a medley of herbs, vegetables, fruits and dried fruits, that was not more remarkable for the multifariousness of its ingredients than for the fantastic ingenuity of their arrangement. "To make a grand sallet," says John Murrell, "take buds of *al* good hearbs, and a handful of French capers, seven or eight dates cut in long slices, a handful of raisins of the sun, the stones being pickt out, a handfull of almonds blancht, a handful of currans, five or six figs sliced, a preserved orange cut in slices; mingle *al* these together with a handful of sugar, then take a faire dishe fit for a shoulder of mutton, set a standarde of paste in the midst of it, put your aforesaid sallet about this standarde, set upon your sallet four half lemons, with the flat ends downwards right over against one another, half-way betwixt your standarde and the dishes side, pricke in every one of these lemons a branch of rosemary, and hang upon the rosemary preserved cherries, or cherries fresh from the tree; set foure half-eggs, being roasted hard, between your lemons, the flat ends downward, prick upon your eggs

sliced dates and almonds; then you may lay another garnish between the brim of the dish and the sallet, of quarters of half eggs, and round slices of lemons; then you may garnish by the brim of the dish with a preserved orange, in long slices, and betwixt every slice of orange, a little heap of French capers. If you have not a standard to serve in, then take half a lemon, and a fine branch of rosemary."

Flesh and fish, such as chicken and veal, salmon and lobster, were often served in green salads, in the middle of the seventeenth century. Robert May gives receipts for several such preparations. It was left for the following century to invent the incomparable dressing Mayonnaise, or (to speak more correctly) Bayonnaise, but the chef who composed the first chicken Mayonnaise did no new thing, in combining *poulet* with green meat.

Whilst our cooks of the seventeenth century made prodigious salads of half-a-hundred heterogeneous, and often discordant ingredients, the chefs of the continent displayed equal zeal and daring in the same department of their art. The grandest of *recorded* salads is one that a lady prepared for the table of Jacob Catz, who died in 1660. A description of this fanciful and elaborate performance may be found in the writings of the Dutch poet, Barlœus. But it may not be inferred

from the celebrity thus accorded to it, that this salad differed materially from the salads usually served at sumptuous tables on grand occasions. Evelyn assures us that it in no way surpassed the salads of the Lord Mayor's banquets.

By the close of the seventeenth century there was need of an elegant and scholarly epicure to reduce to order the conflicting practices of salad-makers. An artist, peculiarly qualified for the difficult task, appeared in John Evelyn, who was at the same time a patron of horticulture, a man of letters, and a fastidious feeder. For the interests of gastronomy, it was also fortunate that Evelyn brought to the undertaking a mature judgment, a mind free from prejudice, and a palate that, never shaken or torpedied by excess, had attained in declining age the fine sensitiveness and exquisite delicacy which can afford the virtuous veteran in gastronomy abundant consolations for the decay of other powers.

Evelyn's "Acetaria" defined the modern salad. Imparting order to chaos, it furnished the cook with intelligent rules and wholesome precepts, and gave precise limits to an art whose special followers had hitherto been the champions of gastronomic license, and the illustrators of gastronomic caprice.

Distinguishing between "olera," vegetables for the pot, which should never be eaten raw, and "acetaria," vegetables which should never be boiled,

John Evelyn had the courage to declare that to cook a salad with heat, or by any slow process of pickling, was to deprive it of the distinguishing attributes to a salad. The true salad was a mess of raw vegetables. He even declined to include among "salleting," in the strictest sense of the term, "apples, pears, abricots, cherries, plums, and other tree and ort-yard fruit," though he admitted that fruit might be admitted as a curious additament, rather than as an ingredient, in salads. The proper sauce for the salad was an artful mixture of mustard, oil, and vinegar, with or without the addition of hard-boiled yolk of new-laid eggs, carefully rubbed into the dressing. One of the points on which the reformer insisted strongly was the material of the salad-bowl. The cooks, who for ostentation's sake used a silver *saladier*, committed a blunder. Those who poured an acetous dressing into a pewter vessel were guilty of an outrage. The proper *saladier* would always be of "porcelaine or of the Holland Delft-ware."

After the rejection of vegetables which should not be eaten raw, and of fruits which should not be accounted as "salleting," there remained some hundred or more growths from which the salad-picker might choose his materials. Evelyn's list of salletting materials comprised several roots and wild herbs never put in the salad-bowl at the present time. It

included: 1, alexanders; 2, artichokes; 3, balm; 4, beet-root and leaf; 5, burnet; 6, blite; 7, borage; 8, brook-lime; 9, bugloss; 10, young buds, such as the buds of the ash and broom; 11, cabbages, several species; 12, Spanish artichoke; 13, carrots; 14, chervile; 15, chickory; 16, clary; 17, chives; 18, cleavers; 19, corn-sallet; 20, cowslips; 21, cresses, several species; 22, cucumber; 23, daisies, blossom and leaves; 24, dandelion-leaves; 25, dock-leaves; 26, elder, leaves and flowers; 27, endive; 28, fennel; 29, several flowers, those, for instance, of the gilly-flower, orange, rosemary, archangel; 30, garlick; 31, goat's - beard; 32, hop - buds; 33, hyssop; 34, Jack-by-the-edge; 35, leeks; 36, lettuce, several species, *i.e.*, Roman, cosse, Silesian, cabbage, and lob; 37, lemon-fruit; 38, mallow; 39, melon; 40, mint; 41, mushrooms; 42, mustard; 43, nettles; 44, Indian nasturtium; 45, onions; 46, orach; 47, orange-fruit; 48, parsnip; 49, green peas; 50, pepper; 51, parsley; 52, pimpernel; 53, purs-line; 54, radish, root and leaves; 55, rampions; 56, rocket; 57, rosemary; 58, sage; 59, samphire; 60, scallions; 61, scurvy - grass; 62, sellery; 63, shallots; 64, skirrets; 65, sorrel; 66, sow-thistle; 67, sparagus; 68, spinach; 69, tansy; 70, tarragon; 71, thistle; 72, trick - madam, or prick - madam; 73, turnip-tops; 74, capreoles, tendrils, and claspers of the vine; 75, viper-grass; 76, wood-sorrel. The



list contained, also, tulip-bulbs, daffodil-buds, and half-a-dozen roots unnamed in this paragraph. It was also the commendable practice of some housewives to sprinkle their salads with powdered saffron "for a noble cordial."

So long as the salad-picker might select from so many growths of the wood, the field, the rivulet, and the garden, there were good grounds for questioning the wisdom of the proverb which declares that a fool is equal to a wise man in salad-picking. To discredit this flippant adage, Evelyn alludes to the dismal tragedies often brought about by foolish salad-pickers, who mistook hemlock and aconite leaves for parsley and parsnip leaves, and threw herbs of death into the pot of green-meat.

But with all his knowledge and care John Evelyn made some mistakes, and one prodigious blunder. He orders us to wash the lettuce and other leaves, which (as every boy in the fourth form at Eton knows) should never be wetted in the kitchen, but should be cleaned only by friction with a dry cloth before they are cut, or, better still, broken and tenderly torn into the bowl. Walker, "the Original," was guilty of the same error. At least, he speaks of "drying the leaves of the lettuce," as though it were necessary to wet them in preparing a salad.

The reader of the "Acetaria" should not fail to

notice its directions for mixing mustard, which show that mustard of the English table in the seventeenth century was made with vinegar, instead of water, like the condiment called now-a-days French mustard. In Evelyn's time Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, was famous for its mustard. The Yorkshire seed was also highly esteemed in the market. When the mustard-powder had been mixed with vinegar in which horse-radish had been steeped, the pap was put into a small earthen or glass vessel on a bed of finely-minced onion that gradually flavoured the whole compound, which was kept closely corked till it was wanted for the table.

The receipts for salad-dressing are innumerable, but there are two which should be found in every new cookery-book. Mr. Hayward's receipt for salad and sauce, given in the "Art of Dining," is, "Rub with a fork the yolks of two eggs, boiled hard and cold, in a salad-bowl, with fresh mustard and a little salt; four table spoonfuls of oil to one-and-a-half of tarragon, mixing it into a cream. Cut in the whites, six lettuces well blanched, some tarragon, chevril, a few young onions and burnet, and stir it well. The sauce should be kept in a separate bowl, and not be mixed with the salad, until the moment it is to be eaten, or it may lose its crispness and freshness."

With poetic fervour and scientific exactness,  
Sydney Smith wrote :

“Two large potatoes, passed through kitchen-sieve,  
Unwonted softness to the salad give.  
Of mordent mustard add a single spoon,  
Distrust the condiment which bites too soon ;  
But deem it not, thou man of herbs, a fault  
To add a double quantity of salt.  
Three times the spoon with oil of Lucca crown,  
And once with vinegar procured from town.  
True flavour needs it, and your poet begs,  
The pounded yellow of two well-boil'd eggs.  
Let onion atoms lurk within the bowl,  
And, scarce suspected, animate the whole :  
And lastly, on the flavour'd compound toss  
A magic tea-spoon of anchovy sauce.  
Then, though green turtle fail, though venison's tough,  
And ham and turkey are not boiled enough,  
Serenely full the epicure may say :—  
Fate cannot harm me—I have dined to-day.”

Blucher told his soldiers, when firing at the enemy, to aim at the part of the body immediately below the “bread-basket.” By aiming at his stomach many a fair man-hunter has brought down the object of her pursuit. There still lives in London a prosperous epicure who in his youth resolved to select a wife from three damsels, who had prudential and other reasons for wishing to marry him. His choice should be determined by their skill in cookery. He would induce them to undergo a competitive examination in the art he valued above all others,

and would award himself as a prize to the candidate who should carry away the greatest number of marks. The young ladies were staying at his mother's house when he carried out his project. Without revealing the purpose of his proposal, he craftily broached the subject of cookery, led the girls on to boast of their prowess, and eventually suggested that they should contend in making boiled custards. Each competitor should have the same materials and opportunities for doing them justice. The proposal being accepted merrily, the custard tournament came off in due course, each combatant being allowed a private room as her peculiar kitchen. It was agreed that the young man and his mother, acting as jurors, should decide on the merits of the performances. In case of difference of opinion, they might invite the housekeeper to aid them in forming a right judgment. But there was no need for consulting a third arbiter. When the three custards were produced, Fanny's was so distinctly best that the two jurors did not hesitate to proclaim her the victor. Three days later Fanny was engaged to the youthful epicure, and three months later they were married. Some twelve months after the marriage, it transpired that in the interval between the agreement for tournament and the time for entering the lists, Fanny had procured from the housekeeper a furtive half-

pint of cream, in addition to the specified materials for war. The cream cost Fanny two sovereigns that were well invested. In justice to her, it should be said she has made her victim an excellent wife, and was heard only the other day to declare, "My dear girls are all that I desire. They are clever, lively, lovely, and of the sweetest temper. But what is to *me* far more important, they are *incapable of artifice.*"

In his "Table Traits," Dr. Doran mentions a lady who made her game at the matrimonial table with a salad, picked and mixed by her own hands so artistically, that it caused a learned judge to kneel at her feet. Ere long the poor gentleman had reason to repent his choice, and to applaud the wisdom of the proverb which declares any fool a competent salad-maker. The lady was a fool with a querulous temper, and speedily showed herself as apt at picking a quarrel as a salad. She fretted and tormented her lord in the good old days, when law-courts instead of closing at four o'clock often sat till late evening; and this judge with an unattractive home was noted for the delight he took in doing his duty by *night* as well as by day. To counsel or jury, who muttered aught of the lateness of the hour and of their engagements elsewhere, he used to say mournfully, "Gentlemen, *as we must*



be somewhere, we cannot be better anywhere than we are here."

The success of this unworthy dame may be matched with that of the "gentleman salad-maker," whose story is told with charming sprightliness by Brillat-Savarin. In the evil days of the great French Revolution, the Chevalier d'Albignac escaped from Paris to George the Third's London, where he subsisted painfully, if not miserably, on a small pittance allowed him by the English Government, until accident afforded him a field for the profitable exercise of the only art which he could turn to money. The Chevalier was dining in the coffee-room of a fashionable hotel, to which he had been invited by an affluent friend, when a young English nobleman, who was dining with another party in the same room, entreated him courteously to mix a salad in the French fashion. The request was made so politely that M. d'Albignac consented, and of course he executed the task in a manner that elicited enthusiastic commendations. His complaisance and communicativeness to the young nobleman had agreeable results. The salad-maker took a fat fee (£5) for his services, and shortly afterwards he received from the lord of a great house in Grosvenor Square an entreaty that he would visit the mansion at a certain hour, to make another salad for an epicurean company. M.

d'Albignac had the good sense to accept the offer, which during the next week was followed by similar applications. His marvellous salads were soon the talk of the town, their fame being accompanied with romantic exaggerations of the misfortunes which had befallen him through the execrable revolution. The "gentleman salad-maker" was the hero of the hour, and ladies of the highest fashion were heard rapturously commending his "works" in gilded salons, or avowing that they could not live another week without devouring one of them. "'I die for it,'" says Brillat-Savarin, "c'est l'expression consacrée.

"Désir de nonne est un feu qui dévore,  
Désir d'Anglaise est cent fois pire encore."

Seizing every opportunity to satisfy his admirers and win new clients, M. d'Albignac started his carriage in order that he might pass quickly from house to house during the dining hours of the aristocracy. Yet further, opening a shop for the accommodation of the many epicures who lived beyond the boundary of his quarter for personal attendances, or who could not afford to pay his fee for a visit, he drove a lucrative trade in sauces, spices, and other culinary dainties. A few years spent in this beneficent activity, enabled the Chevalier to return with a fortune of 80,000 francs

to his native land, where he purchased a pleasant house at Limousin for 20,000 francs, and invested the rest of his money in government securities, which stood just then at 50 per cent.

Brillat-Savarin mentions other Frenchmen of gentle lineage and culture, who, in the same period of public troubles and private embarrassments, armed themselves with spit and stew-pan, and conquered adversity with the weapons of cookery. Whilst M. d'Albignac made salads in London, a nobleman of Brittany flourished as a pastrycook at Cologne, and *le capitaine* Collet acquired riches by making ices for the people of New York. Brillat-Savarin himself condescended to practise the "generous art" at Boston, where in the time of his Transatlantic exile he imparted to Julien, the restaurateur, the secret of making "des œufs brouillés au fromage." Julien, by the way, was a political *émigré*, who had been chef to the Archbishop of Bordeaux before he established himself in the United States. Gastronomic art was affected in a remarkable manner by the great revolution, which compelled the chefs of the shattered noblesse to open a new class of restaurants for the Parisian commonalty, and imparted their mysteries to every civilized nation.

## CHAPTER IX.

## EGGS.

"Eggs were held by the Egyptians as a sacred emblem of the renovation of mankind after the Deluge. The Jews adopted it to suit the circumstances of their history, as a type of their departure from the land of Egypt, and it was used in the feast of the Passover as part of the furniture of the table, with the Paschal Lamb. The Christians have certainly used it on this day, as containing the elements of future life, for an emblem of the resurrection."—HUTCHINSON'S "HISTORY OF NORTHUMBERLAND."

"Bless, O, Lord! we beseech thee, this thy creature of eggs, that it may be a whole sustenance to thy faithful servants, eating it in thankfulness to thee, on account of the resurrection."—PAUL THE FIFTH'S "RITUAL FOR ENGLAND, IRELAND, AND SCOTLAND."

"Humpty Dumpty sate on a wall  
 Humpty Dumpty had a great fall,  
 All the king's horses and all the king's men,  
 Could not put Humpty Dumpty together again."

NURSERY RHYMES.

**A**B ovo usque ad mala. The Roman practice was to open a repast with eggs; but at the English table it has been usual to serve them in later stages of the meal. "In modern entertainments," says the "*Tabella Cibaria*," "they generally come in the rear." The modern epicure, therefore, will not condemn the arrangement which postponed the special consideration of eggs till matters of greater weight and moment, though

scarcely of greater delicacy, should have been discussed. Anyhow, to speak of eggs is a duty that had better be done late than never.

The man would be rash who should venture to state precisely in how many different ways eggs may be cooked. Possibly it is true that the number of those diverse processes equals the number of days in the years. Some readers of this page have probably perused the little book, in which a lady of title not long since gave directions for cooking eggs in a hundred different fashions. Whilst recognizing its merits, the critics concurred in declaring that some of the best methods of preparing eggs were not described in the treatise. The housewife, with a clear memory of the hundred ways, and with sufficient skill for their execution, may, however, deem herself sufficiently instructed and expert in a single department of culinary art. In his orders "To Dress Eggs Divers Ways For Fasting Days, All The Year Round," Giles Rose gives no more than sixty-five distinct receipts. If sixty-five were enough for Charles the Second's chef, a hundred may suffice for a model housewife of the nineteenth century.

The lady of title took some of her "hundred ways" from Giles Rose's "Perfect School of Instructions For Officers of the Mouth," and one at least of the receipts thus transferred from the



“Perfect School” to the “Hundred Ways,” may be found in the “*Magia Naturalis*” of Baptista Porta, who told his readers what to do in order “That an egg may grow bigger than a Man’s Head.” In the absence of proof that he “borrowed” the marvellous process from an earlier scribe, the Neapolitan sage must be regarded as the originator of the curious device which he set forth in Latin, thus Englished by his translator in the Commonwealth period:—“If you would have an egge so bigge, there is an art, how it may cover other eggs in it, and be not known from a natural egge. You shall part fifty or more yelks of eggs and whites, one from the other; mingle the yelks gently, and put them into a bladder, and bind it round as you can; put it into a pot full of water, and when you see it bubble, or when they are grown hard, take them out and add the whites to them; so filling the yelks that they stand in the middle, and boil them again; so shall you have an egge made without a shell, which you shall frame thus. Powder the white egg-shells, clean washed, that they may fly into fine dust; steep this in strong or distilled vinegar, till they grow soft; for if an egge be long in vinegar the shell will dissolve, and grow tender, that it may be easily passed through the small mouth of a glass; when it is thrust in with fair water it will come to its

former hardness, that you will wonder at it; when the shells are dissolved like an unguent, with a pencil make a shell about your egg that is boiled, and let it harden in clear water, so shall you have a natural egge." George the Third wondered how the apples got inside the dumpling. On seeing an egg of this curious manufacture, it would have puzzled him far more to discover how the yolks, whites, and shells of half-a-hundred eggs could be induced to unite and re-arrange themselves so naturally. Baptista Porta's marvellous egg was often served on our supper-tables in the seventeenth century, not so much as a "creature for man's comfort," as a curious adornment and spectacle.

Experience shows that to boil an egg is more difficult than mere theorists imagine. Two-thirds of our hard-boiled eggs are far too hard; and of soft-boiled eggs not one in ten is taken from the water at the happy instant when all the white is fully set, and all the yolk is still fluid. Most of the failures in boiling eggs are referable to the inattention or stupidity of the cook; but the familiar operation is attended with difficulties which no sagacity and care in the operator can always surmount. These difficulties, arising chiefly from the variety of the sizes of eggs, cannot be met by precise and inflexible rules. The "three minutes in the boiling water," which

are the right time for hens' eggs of ordinary size, are too long for the smaller, and too short for the bigger eggs of the same fowl. The same objections apply to the expedient of putting eggs in the water when cold, and removing them from it directly it begins to boil. To boil eggs is a nice, if not an arduous task, and a simpleton should not be trusted to execute it, any more than he should be trusted to compound a salad. The perfect egg-boiler should be able to see through the wall which envelops the object of his address, and observe what is going on inside.

The peasant who bakes his egg in hot wood-embers piled about the shell, knows by a sure sign when the meat is sufficiently cooked. As soon as a clear dew-drop exudes from the shell's top, visible above the embers, the egg is done to the perfection of softness. Ovid alludes to this ancient and probably earliest method of cooking eggs in the line,

“Ovaque, non acri leviter versata favillâ.”

By the way the Egyptians *are said* to have cooked eggs by whirling them round in a sling, till the internal commotion affected the whites and yolks as they are affected by boiling. Not long since a gastronomic investigator bought a sling and basket of eggs for the purpose of testing the efficacy of this process. But though he worked away with a zeal

worthy of a good cause, this slinger of eggs desisted from his exertions with a mean opinion of the Egyptian method. Having agitated and, indeed, cooked himself much more than his eggs, he wiped the sweat from his brow and threw away the sling in disgust. The same inquirer has, however, satisfied himself that the author of the "*Tabella Cibaria*" was justified in saying, "The surest mode of trying an egg is to apply the tip of the tongue to the blunt end; if it feels warm, and the acute end cold, it is a proof that no fermentation has taken place."

The robust countryman may think poached eggs with fried rashers the best of all egg-dishes, but the town-bred epicure will always prefer the savoury omelet to such eggs and collops as are still served in Northern England on Collop (or Shrove) Monday, and were dressed in olden time for Oxford scholars on the Saturday before Shrove Tuesday, at the academic Egg Feast. Taken as a concluding delicacy at dinner, the sweet omelet commands approval, but the omelet of herbs is more acceptable to the nervous student who requires a light, though sustaining dish, with the roll and coffee of his morning meal. As practice can alone enable the practical gastronomer to surmount, avoid, or appreciate the difficulties of omelet-making, little shall be said here of a process to which the first Napoleon directed his attention. Palliating with a pleasantry

one of his disastrous blunders in the art of war, the great Emperor observed, "You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs." Unfortunately the Emperor, like an incompetent cook, had broken the eggs without making the omelet. But if the dish had been successful the artiste would not have wasted a thought on the materials used in its production. So the poor eggs were, in a certain way, gainers by the imperial failure.

Two centuries and more before the rise of the Napoleonian star, another French hero had failed in an attempt at omelet-making. Accompanied by Gourville, who tells the story, the great Condé, in a critical hour of his fortunes, arrived at a small roadside tavern, which could offer the campaigners no better provision than a few new-laid eggs. The only additions the Prince could make to this cheap fare were a basket of bread, a bottle of wine, some cheese, and a few walnuts. Affairs had a melancholy aspect, but the exhaustion of their horses forbade the Prince and his attendants to seek better entertainment elsewhere. The hour was late, the weather stormy, and the region desolate. For that night the village-inn must be the home of the adventurers. To raise the drooping spirits of his party, the Prince declared that he, their chieftain, would for once be their chef. It was a maxim of the military profession that every soldier ought to be a cook, and



surely a leader, who had made campaigns with honour, might be thought competent to make an omelet without failure. So the Prince set to work, and with the help of the landlady, from whom he condescended to take a few practical suggestions, he figured creditably in his new employment till the moment came for tossing the omelet in the pan. Then came the catastrophe, probably through the operator's excessive confidence and zeal. Tossing the omelet—the Prince pitched it into the fire. A groan of agony went up from the famished staff, thus deprived in an instant of the food they sorely needed. Luckily there were still eggs enough for another essay, and the Prince had the discretion to relinquish an office into which he had forced himself with excellent intentions, though with insufficient experience.

Good for the body's health at Easter, as Cogan assures us, scratcht eggs have been known to influence beneficially the eater's spiritual life. Jacques Barreaux, the song-writer, who needed conversion as much as any Frenchman of his time, was won over to religion and the church by a herb-omelet. Like the convenient reasoner who argued that, if a cunning contriver was needful for the manufacture of a watch, the universe, with all its wondrous mechanism must have proceeded from an all-wise Creator, Jacques Barreaux saw that the omelet, which he

had relished so keenly, did not point more certainly to a cook than the whole world to its Maker. Having recognized the author in the thing of art, he went on to "look through nature up to nature's God." Barreaux's conversion and the theologian's watch-trick were probably in Sydney Smith's mind when, at the close of an admirable dinner which had been unpleasantly disturbed by a young man's sceptical declamations, he turned sharply on the free-talker with the question, "And pray, Sir, do you believe in a cook?"

When the Asian Sidonia encountered young Coningsby in a village ale-house, as the latter was on the point of sitting down to a dish of poached eggs and collops, he observed, "Ah! you are proud of your bacon and your eggs; but I believe in corn and wine. They are our chief and oldest luxuries. Time has brought us substitutes, but how inferior! Man has deified corn and wine! but not even the Chinese or the Irish have raised temples to tea and potatoes." It is strange that Mr. Disraeli, whilst playing thus lightly and pedantically with facts from the history of food, omitted so good an opportunity for referring to the sentimental and religious associations of the egg. Since he was in a talkative, not to say lecturing mood, how well it would have been for Sidonia to inform his youthful friend that the egg was regarded as an emblem of the universe

by the ancient Gauls, Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, Persians; that the Egyptians made it a symbol of Human Renovation after the Deluge; and that centuries ere the Christians had accepted their faith from a Jew, and adopted the egg as an emblem of the Resurrection, the "chosen people," honouring it as a symbol of new life, had made it a type of their departure from slavery in Egypt to a better existence in the Land of Promise. Having dealt epigrammatically with this subject, Sidonia might also have heightened Coningsby's enjoyment of his poaches by remarking lightly that, besides exalting it as a symbol of the universe pregnant with life, which in due course assumes living and separate form, the Romans used the egg in divination for ascertaining the future sex of creatures not yet born.

When Livia consulted a fortune-teller on a question of delicate and closely personal interest, she was admonished to hatch an egg by the warmth of her own bosom, and observe the gender of the chicken. If the egg afforded a hen-chick, Livia would have a daughter; if it yielded a cockling, she would have a boy. Having taken to her egg, Livia hatched a cock-bird, whose appearance was quickly followed by a chick of another species—the little Tiberius. Of course Livia's example was generally followed by the matrons of Rome, who,

to use the flippant language of a learned author, "like brooding hens, devoted themselves to the curious amusement of gallinaceous incubation."

Just as Christians in widely separated lands of Christendom exchanged presents of Easter pace-eggs, in token of their faith in the doctrine of the Resurrection, the old Romans used, at the opening of a new year, to give and take eggs in memory of Castor and Pollux, and in sign of their gladness at entering, if not a new existence, a new cycle of time. Prohibited during Lent to the devout, eggs were served at the English table in half-a-hundred different fashions, during our Catholic period, on the termination of that austere season. If the scarcity of eggs during the earlier weeks of Lent may have disposed our ancestors to observe scrupulously the Church's orders for abstaining from them, it cannot, on the other hand, be questioned that the increasing cheapness of eggs after Lent was not less effective than religious sentiment in making Easter-tide a universal egg-festival. Neither of the influences which concurred to render the old egg holidays popular with all classes should be lost sight of. Whilst the mediæval worldlings devoured their Easter eggs eagerly, if not scandalously, because they were good and cheap, and "permitted," devout women thought seriously and gratefully of the

future life, typified by the pace-eggs, which they gave to their children and nearest friends.

Of the decorations of the pace-eggs it is needless to speak at length. Every one knows how they were coloured on the shell with various dyes, or covered with gilding; how some were speckled with dots of white, or were curiously inscribed with letters, legends, or simple pictures; and how the practice of exchanging gifts of these emblematical eggs at Easter gave rise to half-a-score sportive usages whose vestiges may still be found in our rural life. Every Easter, during the time of Louis the Fifteenth, eggs thus embellished used to be piled in high pyramids on the royal table at Versailles; and when the King had surveyed the piles of toys, he used to distribute them amongst his courtiers.



## CHAPTER X.

## DESSERT.

“’Tis the dessert that graces all the feast,  
 For an ill end disparages the rest;  
 A thousand things well done, and one forgot,  
 Defaces obligation with a blot.”

DR. KING’S “ART OF COOKERY.”

“Un dessert sans fromage est une belle à qui il manque un œil.”—  
 BRILLAT-SAVARIN’S “APHORISMS.”

M. de B—— said to a capitalist, I dined the other day with a poet who regaled us at dessert with an excellent epigram. Cræsus, alike ignorant and greedy, instantly sent for his cook and demanded of him, “How comes it that you have never given me any epigrams to eat?”—ANECDOTES OF THE TABLE.

THE reader doubtless remembers that whilst they often opened their banquets with a light and appetizing “prelude” to the first proper course, it was no less usual with the old English to close their feasts with a service of trivial dainties that was not regarded as a regular course. Brawn, salad, bread and wine were the most common “creatures” of the prelude. Hippocras (the mediæval liqueur), wafers, fruits, creams, and cheese were the culinary materials of the after-course, set upon the board as the guests were on the point of retiring.

This after-course—"voider," as it was also termed in Plantagenet and Tudor times—was styled "The Issue of the Table," or more briefly "the Issue," by our best chefs of the seventeenth century. Giles Rose always designated it by the one or the other of these expressive terms ; but Giles Rose lived to hear a new name for "The Issue." Skinner, the philologist, who died in 1667 in the forty-fourth year of his age, speaks of "dessert" (from the Latin *deservire*) as a word newly invented for the after-course of superfluous delicacies, *served* on the removal of the last of *the* services. Commending itself to the scholar no less quickly than to the epicure, the new term passed from table-talk to literature. "We shall," wrote the third Lord Shaftesbury, "to make amends, endeavour afterwards in our following miscellany to entertain him again with more cheerful fare, and afford him a dessert to rectify his palate, and leave his mouth at last in good relish."

"Issue" went out of use, even as "voider" and "aftercourse" had become obsolete in previous times ; and from the opening of the eighteenth century the elegant "finish" of the English dinner has always been called "the dessert."

Though not invariably put on the table, cheese was seldom absent from the olden desserts, for it was believed to help digestion, and was eaten—as it still continues to be eaten by unscientific feeders

—at the close of a hearty meal, as an agreeable remedy for the ill effects of indulgence. “After cheese comes nothing,” is an old table-proverb. Whilst condemning curds as unwholesome, John Russell extolled the medicinal efficacy of cheese. Together with costlier and more elaborate desserts for higher folk, the same author, ordering the franklin’s aftercourse, says,

“Then appuls and peres with spices delicately,  
 After þe terme of þe yere fulle deynteithly,  
     With brede and chese to calle,  
 Spised cakes and wafurs worthily  
 With bragot and methe, þus men may meryly  
     Plese welle both gret and smalle.”

The children of Seager’s “Schoole of Vertue” (1557) are ordered to set a similar dessert before their parents,

“Then cheese with fruite, on the table set,  
 With bisketes or caroways, as you may get.  
 Wyne to them fyll, els ale or beare,  
 But wyne is metest, if any there were.”

Though cheese seldom appeared in Giles Rose’s desserts, the practice of serving cheese with fruits, *au naturel*, or in tarts, was not relinquished at the most modish tables of the seventeenth century. The practice of eating cheese with apple-tart, which still survives amongst the old-fashioned gentle-folk of Lancashire and other provinces, originated in

times when fruit was seldom served at the English table without the accompaniment of cheese.

The modern dessert, by the way, always comprehends cheese in some form, though the division of the true after-course into two parts causes many persons to regard the cheese as part of the play rather than a feature of the epilogue. This division of the dessert resulted from the introduction of the mahogany table, which disposed epicures to banish the cloth on the removal of the last course, in order that they might see the reflections of the glass and fruits on the highly-polished surface of the hard wood. On this innovation in the ordering of feasts, it was decided to dismiss the cheese before the removal of the cloth, as a "creature" which would not add to the lustre and beauty of the aftercourse to which it belonged. Writing in the mahogany period—when the new wood of warm colour and mirror-like brilliance made entertainers especially studious of display in the aftercourse, and was daily eliciting new contrivances for its embellishment,—Dr. King, in "The Art of Cookery," gives us a dessert without cheese.

"Make your transparent sweet-meats truly nice,  
With Indian sugar and Arabian spice ;  
And let your various creams encirc'd be  
With swelling fruit just ravished from the tree.  
Let plates and dishes be from China brought,  
With lively paint and earth transparent wrought.

The feast now done, discourses are renewed,  
 And witty arguments with mirth pursu'd;  
 The cheerful master mid his jovial friends,  
 His glass to their best wishes recommends.  
 The grace-cup follows to his sovereign's health,  
 And to his country plenty, peace and wealth.  
 Performing then the piety of grace,  
 Each man that pleases reassumes his place."

When these lines were first written, it was a question with modish entertainers whether creams should be served at the later dessert, to which they were more disfiguring than ornamental, or should be taken with the cheese at the earlier dessert.

One of Brillat-Savarin's aphorisms declares that a dessert without cheese resembles a lovely woman who wants an eye. A French writer tells a story of a Gascon who, seeing a lovely Roquefort cheese at dessert, exclaimed, "Ah! it is superb; *where* shall I make the first cut?" And then, turning to his servant, added, "Take that cheese home; it is *there* that I will make the first cut."

In connexion with the creams of the Old English dessert, it should be observed that they gave us one of the pleasantest terms in our language. In the "Boke of Nurture" we read,

"Bewar at eve of crayme of cowe and also of the goote, þauȝ it be  
 too late,

Of strawberries and hurtilberyes, with the cold Ioncate,

For þese may marre many a man changynge his astate,

But ȝiff he have aftur, hard chese wafurs, with wyne ypocrate.



But though Russell denounced it as unwholesome, the populace delighted in the preparation of milk-curds, that derived its name of joncate or junket from the "junci," *i.e.*, rushes on which the curds were laid, so that the whey left in them might run off readily, and which, having thus served as a drainer in the dairy, did duty afterwards as a dish for the dainty at table. Wherever milk and festivity abounded in Old England there was also junket; and junket being thus universally associated with joviality, our forefathers regarded it as a symbol of social enjoyment, and used its name as synonymous with hilarity. Holidays were called junket-days, and all the good things eaten at wakes were called junket-fare. Gerarde, in his "Herbal," makes several allusions to "junketting dishes," and Giles Rose points to the etymology of the term when he writes of "cream in jonchee, made with wild reeds." The West of England junket is one of the several milk-foods which still retain the appellation that, limited at first to curds drained on rushes, was eventually extended to other preparations of milk and cream. The Cambridgeshire milk-cheese, served in recent time on straws instead of rushes or rush-reeds, is another variety of the olden junkets.

Solomon the Wise wrote, "As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is the faithful messenger to them that send him, for he refresheth the soul

of his masters"—words even more applicable to the ice of the modern table than to the snow which the King of Israel mingled with his wine in torrid seasons. Like the Jews in their land of sun and drought, the ancient Greeks and Romans were systematic preservers of snow for use in Summer. This being so, it is strange that the moderns of Western Europe did not sooner follow an example which cannot have been unknown to their learned men.

The first of modern people to revive a practice which had been discontinued in the dark ages, the Italians were also the first to cool their drinks by means of saltpetre dissolved in water.

To refrigerate water or wine for his noble patients, Blasus Villafranca, the Spanish physician of Rome in the middle of the sixteenth century, used to employ the following processes. Having filled a long-necked flask with the liquid on which he desired to operate, he placed it in an open vessel of cold water, and moved it quickly round in the same direction on its axis. Whilst thus turning the bottle and agitating the water in which it was immersed, he gradually dropped saltpetre into the water until it was strongly impregnated with the salt. On being taken from the saline bath, the drink in the closed bottle was cold almost to freezing. Who discovered this process is unknown, but as Villafranca only

claimed credit for being the first to make it public, it may be presumed that it was not his invention. Probably it had been employed by the more curious and skilful of the Roman doctors for some time before 1550, in which year Villafranca wrote about the method. Though the ancient Romans may have lowered the temperature by a similar use of other salts, they cannot be credited with originating Villafranca's particular method, as saltpetre was unknown to them.

The next advance on Villafranca's plan for producing coolness was to mix the saltpetre with snow, instead of dissolving it in water, and to place flasks of selected drinks in the salted snow. This step towards the familiar process for manufacturing ice was probably taken before the end of the sixteenth century. Latinus Tancredus of Naples described this method of converting water into solid ice in his "*De Fame et Siti*" (1607), and Baptista Porta, who died in 1615 at Naples, where he was of course known to Tancredus, sets forth the same operation in the "*Natural Magic*," where he says, "I will show how wine may freeze in glasses. Because the chief thing desired at feasts is that wine, cold as ice, may be drunk, especially in Summer, I will teach you how wine shall presently, not onely grow cold, but freeze, that you cannot take it but by sucking, and drawing in of your breath. Put

wine into a vial, and put a little water to it, that it may turn to ice the sooner; then cast snow into a wooden vessel, and strew into it saltpetre powdered, or the cleansing of saltpetre, commonly called Salazzo. Turn the vial in the snow, and it will congeal by degrees."

In the later half of the sixteenth century, whilst saltpetre was being thus turned to account, the practice of preserving snow and ice for consumption in hot weather spread from Italy to other States. In France, the most luxurious epicures of Henry the Third's Court caused snow to be placed on their tables in July and August; and in the following reign this fashion became more general, though the anonymous author of the "*Déscription de l'Isle des Hermaphrodites*" exhibited it to scorn, as an illustration of the wantonness and effeminacy of the age. The satire only extended and stimulated the desire for the new enjoyment. Gallants and fine ladies, who had hitherto been content in Summer to slake their thirst with spring-water and wine cooled in the running rivulet, pined and cried for drinks cooled with snow and saltpetre, as soon as they were told it was immoral to wish for them. Having tried the frigid water and iced wines, they required that other beverages should be treated in the same way. The confectioners of Paris were not slow to obey the order. They iced fresh fruits—peaches, apri-

cots, pears, grapes. They produced drinking vessels of ice, by congealing water between two moulding-cups, the one put inside the other. And having invented lemonade, somewhere about the year 1630, they iced it before giving it to their customers. They treated half-a-score other syrup beverages in the same manner. Thirty years later, not content with refrigerating these drinks, they converted them to ice, *i.e.*, the "water-ice" that is served profusely at our tables in hot weather. The first "water-ices" were manufactured by Procope Conteaux, the Florentine, who, settling in Paris in the latter half of the seventeenth century, founded the famous Café Procope, which still exists, and quickly became the most fashionable caterer of ices, syrup-drinks, coffee, and sweetmeats in that capital. Procope's customers, however, regarding his ices as luxuries for the Summer, seldom or never ate them in the other seasons. The famous Procope's successor, Dubuisson, was the first confectioner to sell ices in Paris all the year round. Cream-ice, or butter-ice, as it was originally designated, was a much later invention than water-ice. It is on record that the first cream-ice was set before the Duc de Chartres in 1774 by a Parisian artiste, who had depicted the duke's arms on the refreshing material.

While the frivolous voluptuaries of Paris were running wild about iced drinks, iced fruits, and



water-ices, in the earlier half of the seventeenth century, the English epicures knew little or nothing of these novelties by experience. A few of our travelling countrymen may have "tried the ice" at Parisian tables. A large number of scholarly Englishmen had read in the Fifth Book of John Barclay's "Argenis" how Juba entertained his guest, Arsidas, under an African sun, with cool drinks served in glacial vases, and fruits cold as block-ice. And to most of the readers of the Latin romance it was known that, instead of being creatures of the author's fancy, he had often seen and taken these refreshments at the tables of Parisian and Italian epicures. But Barclay, who died in 1621, had been many years in his grave before water-ices and refrigerated drinks were served at the banquets of our highest nobility. Lord Bacon mentions congelation by means of snow and saltpetre; but his interest in the novel process is purely scientific, and he gives no hint that the invention was of any concern to gastronomers. The seventeenth century cookery-books are significantly silent about ices, and artificial congelation. The "icing" of their receipts is merely the old process for giving surfaces an icy appearance by varnishing them with sugar-paste. The fact is, England, in the later time of Charles the First and during the Commonwealth, was occupied with weightier and

less pleasant affairs than questions of eating which had no relation to party-politics. Her people could wrangle about "fat goose" and "plum-porridge," or any other edible that became for the moment a symbol of party-sentiment; but they had no money to lavish on new delicacies, when they were melting their plate to buy arms, or groaning under the exactions of a rigorous government. The "generous art," as Robert May bears witness, vanished during our civil troubles, and it was not revived, with ices from the continent, till the season of universal restoration had arrived.

On their return from exile, the Cavaliers imported to England a taste for Parisian costume, manners, and luxury. From the French Court they brought the French wig, some of whose ludicrous varieties are still worn by our lawyers in Westminster Hall. They introduced French modes of exchanging salutes and pledging healths. They were followed by French cooks and confectioners, who substituted cutlets (*costelets*) for chops, and taught our sugar-manufacturers to make the "*sucre brûlé*," a term quickly corrupted by our populace to "barley-sugar," the "*sucre-d'orge*" of the later French sugar-boilers, who, after losing for many years one of their ancestors' processes, recovered it under a new name from our manufacturers. To gratify the foreign tastes which their patrons had acquired

in exile, these same dealers in dainties sold water-ices.

At the same time our royal persons and wealthiest nobles began to store ice in Winter for consumption in the Summer. Charles the Second constructed in St. James's Park an ice-house, which was deemed so notable and curious a contrivance that Waller made particular mention of it in his poem *On St. James's Park, as Lately Improved By His Majesty*,

“Such various ways the spacious alleys lead,  
My doubtful muse knows not what path to tread.  
Yonder the harvest of cold months laid up,  
Gives a fresh coolness to the royal cup,  
There Ice, like crystal, firm and never lost,  
Tempers hot July with December's frost;  
Winter's dark prison, whence he cannot fly,  
Tho' warm the Spring, his enemy, draws nigh;  
Strange! what extremes should thus preserve the snow,  
High on the Alps or in deep caves below.”

In the following century the practice of preserving ice became more general, till, at the commencement of George the Third's reign, water-ices were sold by all the fashionable confectioners of London, and it was rare to find a country-house without adequate provision for “tempering July with December's frost.” Towards the close of the same age cream-ice was also served commonly at our most luxurious tables soon after its invention in Paris. Half-a-century later we began to import

ice in large quantities from America, and at a yet more recent date from Norway. The popularity of Wenham Lake Ice afforded an opportunity for a jest to Albert Smith, who insisted that its sale should be restrained by a statute against chemical poisons and other *wenemous* productions. When Albert uttered this harmless pleasantry, ice, no longer the special luxury of the affluent and fastidious, had become a popular refreshment, sold for a few pence at every pastrycook's shop, and served at Islington no less liberally than in Mayfair. In this latest stage of its story, it resembled the junket of old time in being accepted as a symbol of festivity. When Mr. Chisholm Anstey's copious and acrid eloquence against Lord Palmerston had been abruptly stayed by an invitation to Cambridge House, and a few pleasant words from Lady Palmerston, the silenced orator was denounced by an old colleague for having "sold himself for an ice." Some readers of this page may, perhaps, have listened with malicious glee whilst this sufferer from a comrade's instability exclaimed at dinner-table or in drawing-room, "I have often heard of men selling themselves. There is nothing new in that. As long as the world lasts, men will sell themselves for rank, title, office. If *he* had sold himself for a riband, a star, a snug berth, he would have only done like hundreds of better

men before him. But, Sir, *he* sold himself for *an ice!*" Rated at the lowest, the politician's price was not an ice, but the pleasure of taking it in Lady Palmerston's drawing-room, together with the greater pleasure of being known to have taken it there.

At present, when London abounds with penny ices for the million, who take also their ginger-beer fresh from the ice-wells of vagrant drink-dealers, a large proportion of the inferior ice used by our humblest confectioners and lemonadiers is procured from the ponds and canals near London. And towards the close of a dull, foggy, biting day of a hard Winter, the town affords no sight more depressing to the nervous invalid, and more likely to fill his bones with rheumatic pain and suicidal purpose, than the spectacle of a long line of ice-carts, ice-drays, ice-trucks, moving with scarcely perceptible progress towards the suburban cellar, where each of the vehicles will deposit its chilling, dirty load.

But to pass from ice in its most repellent form to the brighter elements of the dessert, to fruits of warm colour, alluring form, delicate aroma, and delicious flavour.

The Elizabethan table was not more plentifully supplied with vegetables than with fruit. Besides the dried fruits which have been mentioned in a previous Chapter, it displayed the olives, lemons,



and oranges of Southern Europe. This last fruit was highly valued by our Tudor ancestors, in the days when it reminded Henry the Eighth's wife of the orange-groves of her native land. Slaking their thirst with its juice, they prized its peel for its stomachic bitterness, and also for its fragrance, which was supposed to counteract noxious smells. Cavendish's splendid picture of Wolsey exhibits him superbly clad in scarlet silk and sables, and "holding in his hand a very fine orange, whereof the meat or substances within was taken out, and filled again with the part of a sponge, wherein was the vinegar and other confections against the pestilent airs, the which he most commonly smelt under passing among the press, or else when he was pestered with many suitors." In the days when Wolsey thus held a large orange-skin to his nose, as he rode on his mule from chambers to Westminster Hall, the orange-rind packed with spices and wet sponge was the usual *vinaigrette* of modish persons of either sex.

Cogan gave evidence to the medicinal virtues of the same fragrant peel. "The rinds of oranges," he wrote, "are preserved condite in sugar, and so are the flowers of the orange-tree. Either of them being taken in little quantity do greatly comfort a feeble stomache." Though tincture of orange-peel still retains its place amongst the stomachic cordials

of our pharmacopeia, no living physician would recommend a dyspeptic patient to seek relief from his malady by eating the candied rind. In the seventeenth century, however, this sweet and indigestible preparation was eaten to cure heart-burn and colic. In his "Delightful Daily Exercise for Ladies and Gentlemen" (1621), John Murrell gives directions for "making orange-chippes, a very cordial thing against the paine in the stomach." The reader, doubtless, remembers how Boswell was perplexed by Johnson's eccentric practice of pocketing the rinds of the oranges whose meat he had eaten in company. Though Boswell could not conceive the object of this mysterious proceeding, and Johnson persisted maliciously in refusing to gratify his friend's curiosity, there can be no question that the dyspeptical man of letters pilfered the peelings for his stomach's sake.

Whilst orange-trees bore blossom and fruit in the hot-houses of our princes and wealthiest nobles, it was the practice of our seventeenth-century ancestors to serve oranges, raw or boiled, with veal, mutton, and other meats. Oliver Cromwell had a passion for loin of veal sauced with oranges, and it is recorded in the account of his wife's "Court and Kitchen" (1664), that when oranges were selling at fourpence a piece, in consequence of his rupture with Spain, the Protector upbraided

his lady because his favourite joint was set before him without its "proper sauce." Whereupon Elizabeth Cromwell, no less firm in domestic affairs than her husband in matters of state policy, declared roundly that till oranges were cheaper none should be seen at her board. It was a pity, she added, that her lord and master forgot to consult his appetite and digestion before he quarreled with the Spaniard.

The art which had flourished in our monastic gardens during the earlier feudal centuries, and had suffered cruelly from the Wars of the Roses, revived under the two latest Henrys, and made rapid progress in the days of Elizabeth. Harrison speaks of the gardens and orchards of his period in terms which would alone prove that their culture was the favourite amusement of his polite contemporaries. But the social historian is only one of the several witnesses to testify that the Elizabethan was an age singularly propitious to every kind of horticulture. Whilst Lobel and Gerarde were classifying the growths of the soil, Bacon wrote his essay on "Gardens," and munificent patrons of the art—which in later times found worthy illustrators in Cowley, Evelyn, Temple, and Walpole—were procuring new seeds and plants from foreign lands in both hemispheres. Harrison had seen the orange-tree and lemon-tree growing on our soil, and could

name English gardeners who were trying to rear the olive in our northern climate. "We have in like sort," he adds, "such workmen as are not onelie excellent in graffing the natural fruits, but also in their artificial mixtures, whereby one tree bringeth forth sundrie fruits, and one and the same fruit of divers colours and tastes, dallieing with it as with nature and hir course, as if her whole trade were perfectlie known unto them; of hard fruits they will make tender, of sour sweet, of sweet yet more delicate, bereeuing also some of their kernels, other of their cores, and finally induing them with savour of muske, ambre, or sweet spices, at their pleasure. Diverse also have written at large of these several practices, and some of them how to convert the kernels of peaches into almonds, of small fruit to make far greater." He speaks also of the great improvements made during the previous forty years in the culture of the apple, plum, pear, walnut, and filbert.

Whilst the rich had the choicer fruits of their own growing, such as the peach and apricot, the nectarine and fig, hot-house grapes and melons, and procured from foreign lands the pomegranate and the pine, the Elizabethan commonalty had an abundance of gooseberries (gorse-berries), currants, strawberries, pears, apples, cherries, out-door grapes, damascene (damson), and other plums. The choicest

pears of Elizabethan England were the Katharine, the Jeneting, the Royal, the Burgomot, the Quince, and the Bishop's Pear. By the way, the earliest to ripen of these pears was called the Jeneting (a corrupted form of June-eating), because in propitious years it was eatable before the end of June. For this reason the botanists styled it "*pyrum præcoquum*" or "*præcocium*." On the disappearance of this early pear, its popular name was bestowed on the small early apple still called "the jeneting." The Bishop's Pear, styled by learned gardeners *Pyrum Episcopatum*, was known to Elizabethan populace as the Bishop's Thumb, a corruption of *episcopatum*, that still survives in our fruit-markets. The Elizabethans had several other pears, including the famous warden, which, besides being made into pies, was baked or stewed, and served in various ways, with syrup or milk-custards. The "Schola Salerni" condemns pears, peaches, and apples as apt to breed melancholy, but Cogan declined to accept that opinion, without defending the fruit unreservedly. "Rosted," he says, "baked, stewed, peares are not unwholesome. The great peares, which Virgill nameth Gravia Volema, in English peare-wardens, may be longest preserved."

Whilst the Elizabethan epicure prized the finer species of the cultivated strawberry, the doctors used strawberry-leaves and also the plant's roots in



the medicines. Admitting that strawberries were pleasant to the taste, and on occasions slightly beneficial to the digestion, Cogan insisted that they were hurtful when taken in considerable quantities with clouted cream, even as they were devoured in the strawberry season by Oxonian scholars at Botley, and by citizens at Islington. "Wherefore," says he, "they that goe from Oxford to Botley, or from London to Islington to eate cream, make but a sleeveless errand."

Like her successors of the present day, the Elizabethan housewife was careful to boil down fruit with sugar in Summer and Autumn, and preserve it for use in the long season, when uncooked fruit would be scarce or unattainable, and the commonalty would be subsisting chiefly on salted flesh and bread, without vegetables. Her favourite "preserve" was made of quinces; and it should be observed that we are indebted to the "queen of preserves" for the word *marmalade*, derived from *marmelo*, the Portuguese word for *quince*. Cogan speaks of quince marmalade as though it were marmalade in the strict sense of the word, and having given instructions for making it adds, "After the same manner you may make marmalade of wardens, peares, apples, medlars, cherries, strawberries, yea, and of prunes or damasins, and other plummes. First to boyl them upon a soft fire with

a little faire water, till they be soft, then to drawe them as ye doe a tart, after to boyl them again with sufficient sugar, to dash them with sweet water and endore them." All these various "preserves" or "jams," as they are now-a-days called, were covered in Elizabethan England by the word "marmalade," which at present is applied only to such preserves as are made, or are believed to be made, of lemon-rind or orange-peel boiled with sugar. It is needful to speak thus cautiously of the marmalade of commerce; because the omni-present Dundee marmalade contains a large proportion of boiled carrot, a vegetable whose sweetness spares the manufacturer's sugar-barrel, and whose mild flavour is lost in that of almost any fruit with which it is combined. A very palatable carrot marmalade may be made of boiled carrots, mashed and seasoned with a little lemon-peel and lemon-juice.

Recent horticulture having brought fruit to the highest attainable degree of excellence, and the competition of dealers in garden-delicacies having placed its choicest kinds within the daily reach of fairly affluent epicures, the modern *gourmet* has become of late very particular, not to say fanciful and exacting, with regard to the quality of his fruits. Devouring them gustfully when they are of *superlative* excellence, he cannot relish them highly when they are only excellent. Indifferent to the fairly

good, he rejects disdainfully those that are distinctly deficient in texture or flavour. Brillat-Savarin tells a story of a deep drinker who, declining to take some proffered grapes, exclaimed angrily, "I thank you; it is not my custom to take my wine in pills." The fastidious epicure, with no preference for grapes in "daughts," is apt to be intolerant of any that fall beneath the highest standard of perfection.

M. Petit-Radel, the chief librarian of the French *Institut*, and sworn degustator of fruit to Louis the Eighteenth, was an epicure with a taste so critical and exacting, that it was seldom completely gratified with the admirable grapes, nectarines, peaches, brought to his judicial palate by the chief gardeners of the Parisian suburbs. On one occasion, however, he was stirred to enthusiasm. He was sitting over an ancient manuscript in his official study, when he heard the sound of voices outside the door. A few seconds later, the door was opened, so that an outstretched hand could exhibit to his gaze an uncovered basket, holding four superb peaches. It was in the middle of a scorching day, and the librarian's appetite for refreshment rose at the delicious spectacle. "Enter, enter," he ejaculated mildly. The owner of the hand and fruit, a famous market-gardener, having obeyed the invitation, M. Radel rose, and without speaking, seated himself in

an easy chair, his legs crossed, his hands put together prayerfully, his countenance exhibiting at the same time curiosity, doubt, and hope. Cutting one of the specimen peaches in four with a silver knife, the gardener maintained silence until, after fixing one of the quarters on the end of his weapon, he had noiselessly approached the scholar. "Taste the water," he observed in a tone of entreaty, as he put the delicious morsel between the epicure's lips. Closing his eyes, M. Petit-Radel was silent for two or three minutes, during which the artiste regarded him with an intense anxiety, that vanished when the degustator, opening his eyes, observed complacently, "Good! very good, my friend!" Placing the second quarter between the librarian's teeth, the gardener said with more firmness, but still with a petitioning accent, "Taste the flesh." Another period of silence, during which the judge was seen to move his mouth slightly in the discharge of duty to his sovereign. Again opening his eyes, M. Petit-Radel remarked with stronger indications of approval, "Ah! very good, my friend, very good!" Taking up a third quarter on the point of his blade, the grower remarked confidently, "Taste the aroma." It was tasted, and declared, "good—*very* good! ah, mon ami, *very* good!" Two minutes later, the candidate for royal notice put the remaining piece on the end of M. Petit-

Radel's tongue, exclaiming triumphantly, "Now, taste the whole." Having obeyed what was an order, rather than a supplication, M. Petit-Radel rose from his seat, and advancing to his visitor with outstretched hands, and the look which is the most eloquent acknowledgment of great services, he ejaculated with suitable effusion from his brightening eyes, "My friend, my friend, it is perfect! it is superb! you have conquered every difficulty. I render you the homage of my sincerest admiration. From to-morrow, your peaches shall be served on the table of the King!"

Some few years since a fine epicure and peculiarly nice judge of fruit was seen loitering near a sunny wall, upon which a pear, of noble shape and a skin that revealed the excellence of the fruit, was arriving at its perfection. The epicure could not be lured from his wall, although he had promised to drive with a friend at that very hour. "My dear fellow," he said, pointing to the pear, "when I made the engagement I had no notion that this pear would come on so quickly. These pears are truly ripe for no more than five hours; and from the commencement of the first hour of ripeness they improve steadily, if the sun is hot, for two hours and a-half, when they as steadily deteriorate till the end of the fifth hour, after which they are fit only for such persons as can enjoy market-fruit.



I must wait here, and catch *that pear* in the very heart of the middle hour. Excuse me, you must pay your visits alone."

So the friend went for a solitary drive, whilst the epicure loitered before the sunny wall till the pear was ripe. In due course the pear attained perfection. For once, the grower's patience and vigilance were rewarded. The pear was of incomparable flavour.

## CHAPTER XI.

## ORDERING OF FEASTS.

“Ingenious Lister, were a picture drawn  
 With Cynthia’s face, but with a neck like brawn,  
 With wings of turkey, and with feet of calf,  
 Tho’ drawn by Kneller, it would make you laugh !  
 Such is (good Sir) the figure of a feast,  
 By some rich farmer’s wife and sister drest.  
 Which, were it not for plenty and for steam,  
 Might be resembled to a sick man’s dream,  
 Where all ideas huddling run so fast,  
 That syllabubs come first and soups the last.”

KING’S “ART OF COOKERY.”

“A maxim, too, that must not be forgot,  
 Whatever be your dinner, ‘serve it hot,’  
 Your fine ragouts, like epigrams, require  
 A little salt,—but to be full of fire.”

“THE BANQUET,” A Poem in three Cantos.

“TO order” signifies in the first instance to  
 “arrange methodically.” It acquired its  
 secondary meaning, “to command,” from the need  
 of commands for the execution of a design for the  
 systematic arrangement of many things. The  
 ordinary feeder differs from the epicure by omitting  
 to design thoughtfully before he directs authorita-  
 tively. In his most self-dependent mood he is a  
 “commander,” but he never rises to the dignity  
 of an “orderer.” Usually he is neither the one nor

the other, but a meek petitioner, who, conscious of his incompetency to "order," forbears to "command," and trusts blindly to the menial controller of his kitchen. Indeed, it is not every *gourmet* who has the knowledge and discretion requisite for an orderer. Not more than one epicure in ten should be trusted to "order" a dinner. "On devient cuisinier, mais on nait rôtiisseur," says Brillat-Savarin:—cooks are made, but *artistes* are born. The same may be said of epicures and orderers. Everyone eats; a minority, perhaps five per cent. of civilized humanity may, by culture under favourable circumstances, become epicures; but orderers, like poets, are not produced by education. Begotten under an auspicious star, the orderer enters the world with exceptional endowments.

In the "Physiologie du Goût," Brillat-Savarin says, "L'ordre des comestibles est des plus substantiels aux plus légers. L'ordre des boissons est des plus tempérées aux plus fumeuses et aux plus parfumées." Elsewhere in the same work he repeats the same sentiments, so desirous was he to impress them on the student's mind.

Having surveyed the cuisine and banquets of the Old English, the time has come for us to glance at the ordering of modern banquets, and to see how far the arrangements of to-day accord with

ancient practice. But ere we take this concluding survey of the nineteenth century table, let us look again at the Elizabethan board, and turn over a few menus which exhibit the slow progress of culinary art in the seventeenth age.

It is needless to observe that Brillat-Savarin's maxim for the ordering of eatables, was only the precise utterance of a principle generally recognized, though imperfectly obeyed, by our chefs of olden time. In the confusion of meats that distinguished mediæval repasts, we detected a disposition to serve the heavier and cheaper before the lighter and more choice viands. The same rule is observable in the "services" of Elizabethan banquets, which, whilst surpassing the feasts of our earlier ancestors in substantiality, exceeded them also in number and diversity of dishes. Remarking on the variety of viands ordinarily served at the tables of the nobility, Harrison says, "that for a man to dine with one of them, and to taste of euerie dish that standeth before him (which few use to doo, but ech one feedeth upon that meat him best liketh for the time), is rather to yeelde unto a greate conspiracie with a great deale of meate for the speedie suppression of health, then the use of a necessarie meane to satisfie himselfe with a competent repast to sustain his bodie withall." The same writer remarks particularly on the fashion

of English feasters to "begin with the most grosse food, and end with most delicate."

At the same time, the directly opposite practice prevailed in Scotland, where it had been observed that gentlemen were prone to eat so largely of the earlier dishes, as to have neither appetite nor room for the later viands, which often went untouched from the higher tables to the inferior boards. In which case, the fashion of postponing the more delicate meats to the close of the meals resulted in the disappointment of "quality" and the corresponding advantage of varlets. To secure the best of his good cheer for himself, and leave the worst of it to his servants, the prudent Scot reversed the order of meats, and, eating his game in the *first* course, had a *third* service of beef and pork. "The Scot," says Harrison, "thinking much to leave the best for his meniall servants, maketh his entrance at the best, so that he is sure thereby to leave the worst."

To the Scots of feudal time, England was a land of sensuality and wantonness. Just as we attributed our drunkenness and gluttony to the influence of the sottish Hollanders, and our wantonness to the vicious example of the French, the Scotch of olden days insisted that all their wickedness was the fruit of English profligacy. According to them, Satan had his proper home and hunting-ground



south of the Tweed, but was continually despatching his emissaries, in the shape of lewd, tippling Englishmen, to poison the morals and kill the souls of the naturally virtuous Northerners. Left to themselves, the Scotch would have been no less chaste and temperate than hardy and courageous. But alas! they were continually wandering from the paths of their primitive righteousness, and pursuing carnal delights at the instigation of the neighbouring people. An English traveller from Dumfries to Inverness could be tracked by the moral defilements which never failed to mark his course through a simple people. After living to middle age a model of domestic worth and social decorum, many a true Scot had become a prodigy of uncleanness during a few weeks' residence in England, whither he had gone in the pursuit of straying cattle. In the middle of the fifteenth century it was believed by the Scotch that wasteful gluttony had never shown itself in their land till James the First, on his return from captivity, planted amongst his courtiers the vicious tastes he had acquired in England. Bishop Wardlaw of St. Andrew's held this opinion; and in his zeal for the suppression of luxury, the worthy prelate induced the Scotch Parliament to prohibit baked meats to all Scotchmen beneath the degrees of gentility. On flesh-days the plebeian Scot might

eat whatever meat he chose provided he boiled it ; but he could not take a cut of “ roast ” or “ baked ” without sin and punishment. A hundred and fifty years after Wardlaw denounced the luxuriousness of Scottish manners, and deprived the humble folk of baked meat, the Elizabethan table was at the height of its splendour and prodigality.

Like their forefathers of the Plantagenet days, the Elizabethans gave three courses, exclusive of the “ entry ” and “ issue,” at their grand banquets ; but dinners and suppers of only two courses were often served at their tables to large parties. Feasts of two courses were also placed on modish tables throughout the seventeenth century, though Giles Rose, diminishing the number of dishes at each service, doubled the old number of courses. One of his menus is for a dinner of six courses, exclusive of the prelude and the dessert.

Here is a bill of fare from William How’s “ Proper New Booke of Cookery,” (1575) :

*First Course.*—1. Brawne and mustard. 2. Capons stewed in white broth. 3. A pestle of venison upon bones. 4. A chine of beefe, and a breast of mutton. 6. Three green geese in a dish, sorrel sauce for a stubble goose, mustard and vinegar. 7. (After Allhalowe day) a swan, sauce chaudell. 8. A pigge. 9. A double ribbe of biefe roasted, sauce, pepper and vinegar. 10. A loyne of veale or a breast ; sauce, oranges. 11. Halfe a lambe or

kid. 12. Two capons roasted, sauce, wine and salt, ale and salt, except it be on soppes. 13. Two pasties of falowe deere in a dishe. 14. A custard. 15. A dish of leaches.

*Second Course.*—1. Jelly. 2. Pecoock, sauce, wine and salt. 3. Two conyes or halfe-a-dozen rabbets, sauce, mustarde and sugar. 4. Halfe-a-dozen chickens upon sorrel soppes. 5. Malarde and teale, sauce, mustarde and vinegar. 6. Gules and storke. 7. Heronsew, crane, curlew, bittour, bustarde, sauce galentine. 8. Fesand, sauce, water and salte, with onyons shced. 9. Halfe-a-dozen rayles, sauced as the fesands. 11. A dozen quayles. 12. A dishe of larkes. 13. Pasties of red deere in a dyshe. 14. Tarte. 15. Gensbread. 16. Fritters. In these thirty-one dishes, beginning with brawne and ending with fritters, we have all the materials for a dinner of three courses, with a prelude, though they were badly ordered in only two services.

A cookery-book of a later date of the same reign, “The Good Huswife’s Jewell,” (1597), gives us the following order for a less stately repast.

“*First Course.*—Pottake or stewed broth. 2. Boyled meat or stewed meat. 3. Chickens and bacon. 4. Powdered beef. 5. Pies. 6. Goose. 7. Pigge. 8. Rosted beef. 9. Rosted veale. 10. Custard.

*Second Course.*—1 Rosted lamb. 2. Rosted capons. 3. Rosted conies. 4. Chickens. 5. Peahennes. 6. Baked venison. 7. Tarts.

The notable feature of this menu is the approach to modern usage in the substitution of "soup" for the ancient prelude of "brawn and mustard." Though the mediæval "entry" continued to maintain its place throughout the seventeenth century, the Elizabethan practice of beginning dinner with soup was never relinquished.

The author of "The Accomplished Ladies Delight in Preserving, Physick, Beautifying and Cookery," (1684), gives us the following order for an elegant dinner at Candlemas-tide.

*First Course.*—1. A pottage with a hen. 2. A Chatham pudding. 3. A fricacie of chickens. 4. A leg of mutton with a sallet. Garnish your dishes with barberries.

*Second Course.*—1. A chine of mutton. 2. A chine of veal. 3. A lark-pye. 4. A couple of pullets, one larded and garnished with orange-slices.

*Third Course.*—1. A dish of woodcocks. 2. A couple of rabbits. 3. A dish of asparagus. 4. A Westphalia gammon.

*Last Course.*—1. Two orange-tarts, one with herbs. 2. Bacon-tart. 3. Apple-tart. 4. A dish of pip-pins. 5. A dish of pearmain.

This last course was the "issue" or "dessert." It is worthy of observation that the same writer resembles most of the chefs of his period in using "banquet" to designate a single service of such delicacies as fruits and sweetmeats. For instance, he orders a Candlemas "banquet" thus: "1. A dish of apricots. 2. A dish of marmalade of pippins. 3. A dish of preserved cherries. 4. A whole red quince. 5. A dish of dried sweetmeats."

The longest, and perhaps most characteristic, of Giles Rose's "orders" is the following Summer menu of nine courses, *i.e.*, six courses with "prelude," a service of thick soups, and "dessert."

"*At the Entry.*—1. Good bread. 2. Good wine. 3. Apricots. 4. Damask plums. 5. The petitz paste, or little pyes of venison, hot. 6. Talmouses, made of the brain of a capon, minced and baked like cheese-cake.

"*Pottages.* — 1. Boiled and larded venison. 2. Chickens in stove. 3. Bisets or wood-pigeons, with sprouts and young coleworts.

"*First Service.*—1. Partridges with small salt. 2. Hot venison-pye. 3. Young rabbits, also with small salt.

"*Second Service.*—1. Herns, with a bastard-sauce. 2. Levrets. 3. A pye of quails.

"*Third Service.*—1. Soust or pickled meat, with



a cordial sauce. 2. Chickens in sharp-sauce. 3. A pye of widgeons.

“*Fourth Service.*—1. *Estoudeaux au moust*, or stares, that is with a sauce of new sweet wine, or the juice of grapes, squeezed in your hand. 2. *Oyson à la Malvoisie*, or a goose in white sauce. 3. Pullets *Faisendez*, or mortified like a pheasant.

“*Fifth Service.*—1. Pidgeons with sweet sauce. 2. Venison. 3. Cold venison-pye.

“*Sixth Service.*—1. Pig. 2. Pears. 3. Plaches. 4. Sturgion.

“*At the Issue of the Table.*—1. Three things baked upon a dish. 2. Jelly. 3. Apples.”

This elaborate, and in some respects elegant, repast may be regarded as a fair specimen of the dinners and suppers served at the tables of our courtliest and most luxurious nobles of the Restoration period. The English cuisine, it will be allowed, was making rapid advance to modern perfection when Charles the Second's cook could design a feast so free from Tudor massiveness, and so devoid of the incongruous combinations and multifariousness of the mediæval repasts. An innovator in the direction of lightness and elegance, Giles Rose was the first English chef to prefer delicacy and grace to diversity and superabundance. A disciple of the French school of artistes who flourished under the patronage of Louis the Fourteenth, he was the first English

cook to serve courses of so few as *three* dishes, his favourite number of viands for a single service.

It has been already remarked that fish was never duly honoured by epicures, so long as they were enjoined to eat it in certain seasons and on certain days, when they were forbidden to touch flesh. It would have been strange if they had not undervalued the meat which the Church regarded as the diet of penance and humiliation, whilst the secular law rated it as an inferior food, which men should be compelled to eat for political ends. In our Catholic period, as we have seen, fish was seldom served in flesh-days, and when it appeared at a flesh-feast it was brought on with the lighter meats towards the close of the repast, as a trivial additament of the service. It was dressed in half-a-hundred various ways; but the cooks who prepared it in so many fashions disdained it as a comparatively cheap and flavourless material. How to make so poor a food highly palatable was the grand problem and difficulty of culinary science. In this respect the Elizabethan artistes and gourmands resembled our cooks and gluttons of earlier time. If they preferred some kinds of fish to other species, they preferred ordinary flesh to the choicest fish. Eating fish under compulsion, they selected the best, or rather what they took for the best, but "bad is the best" was the familiar phrase that ex-

pressed their low esteem for delicacies which they could not appreciate justly. It is singular that the modern practice of serving fish before flesh at the same repast had its origin in the period, when the former meat was in such disfavour that modish and luxurious people were glad to pay highly for exemption from the law, which ordered it to be eaten on all Wednesdays and Saturdays, not falling in Christmas week or Easter week, as well as on the fish-days of the Church.

Enacted for "the maintenance of the Navye," *i.e.*, for the encouragement of the class which provided sailors for the Commonwealth, the Statute, 5 Elizabeth, c. 5 (1562-3), ordered all persons to abstain from flesh, and content themselves with fish-diet on three days of the week, and also on all days "usually observed as fishe days." The penalties of disobedience to this law were heavy. For every offence against its orders the offender was liable to a fine of three pounds (say £30 of Victorian money), or close imprisonment, without bail or mainprise, for three months. But the rigour and comprehensiveness of the Statute's eleventh section were greatly modified by subsequent clauses. A "lord of the realm" might buy exemption from the new law by an annual payment of twenty-six shillings and eightpence to the poor-box of the parish. On the same terms his lady could purchase

the privilege of eating flesh on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The same exemption was accorded to a knight or his lady for an annual payment of thirteen shillings and fourpence, and to any person beneath the knightly grade for a yearly offering to the poor-box of six shillings and eightpence, paid within six days after the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary. In case of illness, any person could obtain exemption from his parish priest by means of a special license, granted for eight days, and renewable on every eighth day throughout his disorder, the only charge for such license being a fee of fourpence to the parish registrar, who recorded the exemption in the Church Book. Yet further, by section 22 of the Statute, it was enacted that on all fish-Wednesdays one flesh-dish might be served at any table with every three "competent usual dishes of sea-fishe," provided such fish-dishes were put on the board *bonâ fide* for actual consumption.

One of the most characteristic sections of this curious enactment provided "That whosoever shall by preaching, teaching, writing, or open speeche, notifie that any eatinge of fishe and forbearing of fleshe mentyoned in this statute ys of any necessitye for the saving of the soule of man, or that yt ys the service of God, or otherwise than as other politike lawes arre and bee, then suche person shall bee punished as spreaders of fause newes are or ought

to bee." That is to say, they should be whipped by the parish beadle, put in the stocks, or thrown into prison.

The twenty-second section of the law had a notable effect on the ordering of English dinners. Whilst the rich avoided the new impositions of fish-diet by annual payments, the lowest of which exceeded £3 of Victorian money, the commonalty and needy persons of quality availed themselves of the permission to have one flesh-dish at their Wednesday meals for every three fish-messes. Hence arose the general practice of serving both kinds of viand at the same table. The fashion of serving the fish before the flesh arose at the same time. To show that he had no disposition to abuse the relaxing clause, by substituting a diet of flesh for one consisting chiefly of fish, the Elizabethan housekeeper caused the "three competent dishes of sea-fishe" to be set on the table at the beginning of dinner or supper, and refrained from flesh till they had been honestly distributed and eaten.

The fashion, which thus arose from orderly submissiveness to Elizabeth's enactment, has never disappeared from the English table. It created in our fairly prosperous households a taste for fish, as a light and appetizing prelude to flesh, that gradually asserted itself in the higher and wealthier classes, till it became in the eighteenth century a point of



gentility to open every dinner with a service of the delicate food which delighted the palates of gastronomers, as soon as religion and law had ceased to force it down their throats.

Under the influence of chefs who followed in the steps, whilst improving the method, of Giles Rose, our table assumed its modern order in the earlier half of our Georgian period. In the later decades of the last century the English epicure's dinner consisted of soup and fish for a prelude, a course of "made dishes," a second course of joints and "solids," and a third of game and sweets, followed by a dessert. The "made dishes," or *entrées*, which old-fashioned folk derided as "French kick-shaws," and "mere gallimawfreys," were prepared from the receipts of French chefs, who practised their art in the kitchens of our nobility. But in respect to their "made dishes," these foreign artistes should be regarded as restorers of the old English cuisine, rather than as importers of Continental inventions. Most of the "novelties" were things of mediæval contrivance, that had been common cheer at our Plantagenet tables.

Whilst regarding its order, the enlightened epicure has no difficulty in referring to their historic sources the principal elements of the English dinner. The soup is old English, a term synonymous with Roman for the purpose of this survey. The prac-

tice of eating fish at "the entry" is Elizabethan, though it was popular long before it was fashionable. Old English influence is conspicuous in our *entrées*, especially in those that are made of minced or pounded viands. Highly-seasoned curries, for instance, are emphatically old English fare, though our nabobs of the last century are commonly believed to have brought them, with other stimulating preparations, from the East. Whilst their colour reminds us of the rage for yellow which prevailed throughout the saffron period of our cookery, their name preserves the old English term for "culinary practice." For seasoning their dishes of minced meat, the chefs of the "Forme of Cury" had two cury, or *curry* powders—the *forte* and the *douce*—from which the highly-seasoned messes derived their special appellation. Our joints and solids are Tudor; but the fashion of carving them in thin slices is of the Stuart or post-fureine period. In our sweets and fruit dishes old English influence is dominant. Modern elegance and luxury are prominent in the dessert, which, however, had its germ in the old English after-course. Block-ice was introduced by the epicures of the Restoration; cream and water-ices came to us from France in the last century.

The English reader may conclude this survey of our modern table by reflecting with pride that,

whatever its shortcomings, the English cuisine has enjoyed for centuries a high reputation on the Continent for richness and refinement. Whilst he relished the fare given him in this country, Hentzner was of opinion that the Elizabethan English were more "polite in eating than the French." Misson, who lived chiefly amongst our citizens of middle rank, thought meanly of our culinary address; but he admitted that our nobility fostered the "generous art," and fared with French delicacy. Towards the close of the last century, French cookery was not more liberally encouraged in London than English cookery in Paris. Half a century since, the great Ude wrote of us, "I will venture to affirm that cookery in England, when well done, is superior to that of any country in the world." And only the other day, M. Urbain Dubois, the Emperor of Germany's chef, declared in his "Artistic Cookery:" "It is a fact worthy of notice that, in England, culinary art is more cultivated than in any other country." Dubois accounts for our gastronomic zeal and culinary pre-eminence by arguing that the excellence of our *matériel*—especially of our mutton and beef—has affected our gastronomic morality, by rousing in our breasts a superb ambition to render justice to such incomparable viands. He insists that though "sheep are diffused all over the world," the Continental epicure, who would ascer-

tain all the delicious possibilities of mutton, should pursue his inquiries in this country. So also of beef, he observes :—"It must be acknowledged that it is only in England it meets with the care and attention it requires, and where the foresight and sacrifices necessary to ensure its perfection are properly understood."

## CHAPTER XII.

## COOK-SHOPS AND CLUB-HOUSES.

“La Révolution, en ruinant tous ces anciens propriétaires, a mis tous les bons cuisiniers sur le pavé. Dès-lors, pour utiliser leur talens, ils se sont faits marchands de bonne-chère sous le nom de Restaurateurs. . . . Cette révolution dans la cuisine et la fortune de ces restaurateurs habiles tient encore à deux autres causes; la manie de l'imitation des mœurs anglaises (car les Anglais, comme l'on sait, mangent presque toujours à la taverne), et cette subite inondation de législateurs sans domicile, qui, finissant par donner le ton, ont entraîné par leur exemple tous les Parisiens au cabaret.”  
—ALMANACH DES GOURMANDS. 1803.

“Maturer age to this delight grown strange,  
Each night frequents his club behind the 'Change,  
Expecting there frugality and health,  
And honour rising from a sheriff's wealth;  
Unless he some Insurance dinner lacks,  
'Tis very rarely he frequents Pontacks.”

DR. KING'S “ART OF COOKERY.”

WHERE should we look for facts to justify M. Dubois' high opinion of our cookery? Scarcely in our club-houses, where, though it never falls below average goodness, the “generous art” seldom rises to the highest degree of excellence. Still less in our public dining-rooms, where, in the absence of critical patrons and competent professors, it has languished for half a century, and in the last twenty years has sunk to the low level of a vulgar industry.



To our opprobrium, it must be confessed that there is no Continental capital so poorly provided as London with establishments where the stranger may obtain a fairly good dinner for a small sum, or an excellent dinner at a great price. In the western districts of the town, millionaires and spendthrifts may fare delicately, as well as sumptuously, at the few private hotels which draw their prodigious profits from a small class of luxurious and opulent visitors. But to test the capabilities of the chef, retained in any one of these exclusive and decorous taverns, it is necessary that the curious inquirer should take an apartment, and attain the status of a guest "staying in the house." Even when he places a coffee-room at the service of casual visitors, the keeper of a private hotel is little studious to please the caller who only "drops in for dinner" before going to the opera. London has also a few large hotels where the stranger may dine sufficiently, if not *well*, for twice the sum that he would pay for a much better meal at a second-class Paris restaurant. But apart from these few and unsatisfactory places that cannot be easily discovered by travellers unfamiliar with the town, what accommodation does London offer to the thousands of persons who, in default of invitations to private tables, must take their food and drink from public caterers? What are her hospitable arrangements for foreigners in

lodgings, country cousins who do not care to dine every day at their hotels, and the hundreds of clubless bachelors who inhabit chambers in the east-central and west-central districts?

They have a choice of houses where dinners are provided for casual customers. There are the old-fashioned chop-houses, whose arrangements were excellent for the persons who frequented them in the last century, though very discordant to the usages and taste of the present period. There are the antiquated hotels of the Covent Garden quarter and the principal thoroughfares between the City and Hyde Park, in whose dingy coffee-rooms gentlemen may get a substantial dinner from the joint and a pint of inferior wine for eight or ten shillings. The Strand and Fleet Street have several long, low, dirty rooms, where economical feeders, seated on the narrow benches of a dozen or more little pews, satisfy their hunger with plates of meat and vegetables, in the din and heat of company three times too numerous for the space. There are also the modern, flashy, pretentious dining-rooms, where, in salons splendid with cheap gilding and fly-flecked plate-glass mirrors, a weary mortal may get a piece of fish, a cut from a luke-warm joint, and a bottle of thin claret at a charge for which he could procure a really capital dinner in Paris, though the prime cost of *matériel* is almost

as high in the French capital as in London. But no one can dine well and comfortably at any of these establishments. To avoid extortion, the diner must expose himself to heat, noise, offensive company, and the irritations of a villainous cuisine. To dine on decent fare, in a room sufficiently large for the company, and in an atmosphere of proper temperature and purity, he must submit without a murmur to the considerable exactions of the food-tariff, and the scandalous exactions of an impudent *wine-carte*.

In this respect modern London compares disadvantageously with old London. The bravest and merriest gentlemen of the town frequented the Elizabethan ordinaries, where persons of every honest degree met and talked over the bountifully furnished tables. In Charles the Second's London every important tavern had its daily *table-d'hôte*. At the same time, the town had such luxurious restaurants at Chattelin's and Pontacks, and ruder cook-shops where the visitor could select his cut from any one of twenty joints, turning on the spits before the kitchen-fire. "Generally," says Misson of these places, where lords of the realm would take a snack with their tradesmen, and merchants would dine sociably with clerks, "four spits, one over another, carry round each five or six pieces of butcher-meat, beef, mutton, veal, pork, and lamb;

you have what quantity you please cut off, fat, lean, much or little done; with this, a little salt and mustard upon the side of a plate, a bottle of beer, and a roll; and there is your whole feast." One can readily imagine the shortcomings and discomforts of these sociable cook-shops, but no frequenter of them could complain of the diversity and choice of meats.

All that can be said of the liveliness and freedom of the Elizabethan and Caroline *tables-d'hôte*, may be affirmed of those ordinaries of the eighteenth century, whose humours divert the readers of Steele, Fielding, and Smollett, even more than they amused Mr. Spectator and Sir Roger. The cook-shops may have suffered from the gradual development of coffee-houses and establishments for eating; but the ordinary flourished long after the Georgian coffee-room — unlike the earlier coffee-houses whose arrangements justified their name — was the habitual dining-place of its customers. At present the Georgian coffee-room, where coffee was seldom served, may appear deficient in lightness and space. We are disposed to wonder how our great-grandfathers contrived to "sit at their ease," for hours together, on its narrow, straight-backed forms. Together with the taste for the fruity wines put on its small tables, we have lost the taste for its too solid cuisine. But its arrangements were in

harmony with prevailing notions of comfort, when gentle-folk delighted in the cosiness of little rooms, and were trained to think it effeminate to repose on sofas and lounge-chairs. Moreover, it should be remembered to the credit of these places of reunion, that like the coffee-room of Dryden's day, the Johnsonian coffee-room was the centre of every masculine coterie, and the favourite resort of scholarly or modish men of all the higher social grades.

In the earlier years of the present century London could boast that it had never possessed a better supply of dining-houses. Whilst such suburbs as Highgate, Hampstead, and Chelsea, and such outlying places as Greenwich, Putney, Twickenham and Richmond, were known for taverns that provided good dinners and excellent wine, the town abounded with inns and restaurants where the cookery was perfect in some particular way, if not in every way.

In "the city" the epicure had Birch's in Cornhill for turtle, or he could get a mid-day snack of cutlets and asparagus, or sandwiches and sherry at Garraway's in Change Alley, beneath the sale-room where West Indian estates and other property were sold by candle-auction. "At the commencement of a sale," says a describer of the coffee-house, alike famous for its luncheons and its early interest



in the tea-trade, "when the auctioneer has read the description of the property and the conditions on which it is to be disposed of, a piece of candle, usually an inch long, is lighted, and he who is the last bidder at the time the light goes out is declared the purchaser." But for his dinners—when he had no invitations to feast with aldermen or company, and was not disposed for a costly meal at the Albion, in Aldersgate Street—the civic epicure relied chiefly on the chop-houses of his part of the town. Dolly's chop-house, in a quiet passage midway between Newgate Street and Paternoster Row, the house where Dr. George Fordyce dined daily for more than twenty years of his studious and rather gluttonous career, may be mentioned as a specimen of these "city houses," where meat of the finest quality was cooked with exquisite skill.

Similar houses could be counted by the dozen in the immediate neighbourhood of the Inns of Court. It is enough to allude to such houses as the Cheshire Cheese, the Mitre, the Rainbow, and the Cock, whose "plump-faced waiter" (of a later period) was very indignant on hearing that he had been "put into a poem." But though their larders and cooks were honourably known, these taverns of the Temple district are scarcely so celebrated in gastronomic annals as in the history of toping.

Always a "late house," the Cock coffee-room was something later than usual on the nights when a new member was elected to "The Philosophers," a club of learned and tippling sages who, sixty years since, used to meet every evening in a particular box.

Going westward from Chancery Lane, the epicure in search of a good dinner might attain his object at the Hercules Pillars, in Great Queen Street, directly opposite the Freemasons' Tavern. Or he might pause in his course towards the Covent Garden Hotel, and glance at the bill of fare which Mr. Jupp had placed in the coffee-room of The Queen's Head. A daring innovator, Jupp was the first of British publicans to serve his parlour-guests with spirits in small pewter measures. "Waiter," a gentleman, with a husky voice and shrill note in it, exclaimed to one of the Queen's Head servitors, "*One* more half-quartern and then I'll *go*." The waiter was running to execute the order, when another gentleman with a still huskier voice and even shriller note in it, called out viciously, "And bring me another whole quartern, for by Heaven! I mean to *stay*!" The hearers laughed after the fashion of tavern-haunters sixty years since, long and loudly; and from that evening the two measures were known to Mr. Jupp's customers as "a go" and "a stay."

If Mr. Jupp's menu could not induce him to stay, our wandering epicure could go further westward, and find at intervals of a hundred yards a series of well-managed dining-rooms. His route from Covent Garden to Bond Street passed the doors of some of the best restaurants of the town. The Sablonière, named after the Parisian chef, La Sablonière, was daily thronged by *gourmets* who preferred it to the several other French houses of Leicester Square. May-Fair had at least a dozen establishments where her dandies could dine fairly or sumptuously by the *carte* or at well-appointed *tables-d'hôte*. Gover's Coffee-house in Brook Street, and Mount Coffee-house in Grosvenor Street, were famous for their dinners. The same may be said of the "Prince of Wales," in Conduit Street, and "Thomas's" in Bruton Street. Bond Street had half-a-dozen dining-houses, such as Molloy's Tower Hotel, the Blenheim Coffee-house (a "very aristocratic house" when Fosbury kept it in the Waterloo year), and the Green Man, described by the author of "The Epicure's Almanack," as "fashionable but cheap." But though they dined at the Green Man when their ready money was running short, modish gentlemen did not like to be seen coming out of a place so decidedly inferior to "the Blenheim." "When you come out," says the particular snob of the period, who compiled "The Epicure's

Almanack," (1815), "you of course mix with the lounging, well-dressed mob, and not a soul will surmise that you have not dined at a sumptuous *table-d'hôte*." Gunter in Berkeley Square served dinners to gentlemen of quality on his premises, before the development of the club-house system deprived him of the most lucrative part of his original business.

At the present time, no loiterer about town would walk northward from Pall Mall to seek a pleasant dinner at a tavern or *traiteur's* shop near Manchester Square. But sixty years since the neighbourhood of this square, on the north of Oxford Street, abounded with cooks and confectioners of high credit in gastronomic circles who, whilst "sending" dinners "in" to the houses of their patrons, were keepers of public eating-rooms. Indeed, Manchester Square was emphatically *the* quarter for French dinners. Parmentier, whilom confectioner to the Prince Regent and Dukes of York and Kent, had his place of business at 9, Edward Street, Manchester Square. Romualdo (the Signor) flourished at 29, Duke Street, next door to Morin, the superlative excellence of whose cuisine was attributed chiefly to the attention he paid to the health of his "tasting" cooks. "The dinners," a contemporary author observes of M. Morin's treatment of his servants, "are cooked by French artistes, who are at stated

times carefully physicked and dieted, in order to preserve their palate in all its delicacy of tact. This is a most essential precaution, not sufficiently attended to by our Amphitryons, as the frequent chagrins over dinners overdone or underdone palpably demonstrate." The writer adds, "The wines are excellent, Monsieur and Madame Morin being natives of France!" Another of the French cooks of this district was Monsieur Romaingoux who, besides entertaining customers at his own residence, condescended to officiate as occasional chef in private families. Romaingoux lived at 36, George Street, where he had for a near neighbour Mohammed, "the native of Asia," who was incomparably great in curries, and kept an eating-house for nabobs and other connoisseurs of Oriental cookery.

A considerable proportion, perhaps the majority, of the French cooks established as restaurateurs in London at the opening of the present century, had studied the mysteries of their art in the kitchens of the *ancien régime*, whose chefs and culinary traditions were scattered over the earth's surface by the revolutionary tempest. Pleasant stories could be told of the fidelity with which some of these cooks served without fee, and shielded from destitution the masters whom they had followed into exile. For the *few* French



chevaliers who, like M. d'Albignac, supported themselves in this country by culinary practice, there were *many* who were saved from abject need by the exertions and generosity of their former kitchen-servants.

At the opening of the present century, London had only three of its existing club-houses, White's, Boodle's and Brooks's. The "Alfred" was established in 1808, the "Guards" in 1810. The next thirty years of London's story were alike remarkable for the rapid extension of the club-house system, and the rapid decadence of cookery at public dining-rooms. In 1840 the town had twenty west-end clubs. The great co-operative movement was not more beneficial to younger sons than injurious to gastronomic interests. By withdrawing from the public dining-rooms precisely the class of customers who were best able to stimulate and reward the ingenuity of cooks, the new clubs were disastrous to the London restaurants. Whilst the keepers of our best eating-houses fell into bankruptcy or urgent difficulties from the desertion of their most liberal patrons, their cooks languished from want of sympathy and critical praise. A single trade, or rather let us say the flower of a single profession, suffered from co-operation then, just as all the retail traders of the town are suffering from it now. The French

houses north of Oxford Street died out one after another. Gloom and wretchedness settled on the hotels of Leicester Square, which from being the haunts of our richest *gourmets* became mere eating-houses for exiles. At the same time the May-Fair restaurateurs put up their shutters, or adapting themselves to the new order of things made strenuous efforts to drive a larger trade, as confectioners and providers of rout-suppers and wedding-breakfasts, whilst they ceased to serve dinners on their premises.

Whilst cookery for the public has languished under the cold shadow of the clubs, the culinary art cannot be said to have flourished in the joint-stock palaces. The conditions and influences of the club-system check the zeal and lower the ambition of cooks, who more than all other artistes need the stimulus of sympathy and commendation. The club-cook is the servant of a committee, proverbially the coldest and least conscientious of employers, and however desirous it may be to foster gastronomic art, a committee can never detect a chef's merits so readily, or acknowledge them so aptly and seasonably as a single ruler could do.

On first entering the service of a club, the young and ardent chef may strive for the appreciation of his new patrons. He may cherish a lofty purpose

of extending the bounds of his art, and of making his kitchen a nursery of rising artistes. But this enthusiasm soon disappears under the annoyances and depressing circumstances of his position. The committee accepts his efforts as a matter of course. Now and then it may give him a phrase of formal commendation, when he has glorified a house-dinner with a new invention, or lavished super-human energies on a ceremonious banquet. But for every time when he thus extorts a frigid acknowledgment of his merits, there arise a dozen occasions when he is summoned before his special "board" to answer some groundless complaint from a dissatisfied, because dyspeptic, diner. Your habitual club-grumbler is largely accountable for the failings of the kitchen which he thinks to reform and elevate by his querulousness. When he chuckles over the apparent success of his last "complaint of the general badness of the dinners," and congratulates himself on having got the cook "another wiggling from the committee," the grumbler should be informed that a "wiggling from the committee" only disheartens an honest chef, instead of "whipping him up," and that whilst extinguishing all generous zeal in his breast, it only tends to make him more studious to avoid blame by mediocre efficiency than to extort homage by superlative success.

Again, our club-cooks suffer from the want of that rivalry which stimulates the chefs of competing restaurateurs to surpass one another in skill and inventiveness. However exceptional his endowments, the chef seldom raises the number of dinners ordered at his club. Even when it disposes a few members to dine at their club more frequently than they would otherwise do, his excellence cannot affect the life of other joint-stock houses. He is, therefore, denied the triumphant excitements of the chef whose renown draws to a public restaurant the ancient supporters of rival establishments.

Chilled by his committee, harassed by his grumblers and hopeless of fame, the club chef, if he perseveres in a thankless office, soon becomes a mere artiste of routine. He may escape frequent censures by the general fairness and evenness of his cookery, but he never wins, and seldom merits, the applause of connoisseurs.

It is needless to add that to justify his high opinion of our cookery, M. Dubois would point to the tables of those members of our affluent classes who are of opinion that to "live wisely" it is needful to "live well."

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE FOLK-LORE OF FEEDING.

"To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

"Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."

SOLOMON'S "PROVERBS."

"La découverte d'un mets nouveau fait plus pour le bonheur du genre humain que la découverte d'une étoile."—BRILLAT-SAVARIN'S "APHORISMS."

"**E**NOUGH is as good as a feast" holds a chief place amongst proverbs in favour of moderation, though a perverse epicure argued from it that anything less than a feast could not be enough. The philosopher who originated the adage left too much to individual discretion; for whilst a feast is an uncertain measure, learned authorities differ as to what amounts to enough. When little Oliver asked for more, he was supposed to have had "enough," though the general sentiment favoured his demand. In seeking how much constituted a feast in olden time, we derive no assistance from the maxim, "There is little difference between a feast and a belly-full." For bellies are of various capacities. When the Abbé de Voisenon was directed



to drink a quart of ptisan every hour, he protested pathetically to his doctor, "Ah, my friend, how can you desire me to swallow a quart an hour? *I hold but a pint.*" On the other hand, the famous glutton of Kent, elevated by Fuller to a place amongst the worthies, could devour with ease at a single meal thirty dozen pigeons, and rise with an appetite from a repast consisting of "fourscore rabbits and eighteen yards of black pudding, London measure." Moreover, the adage is less an utterance of popular wisdom than the brutish sentiment of some dull glutton who, caring chiefly to gorge himself, was indifferent to the quality of his food.

Another of our familiar adages in favour of temperance is, "Eat to live, but do not live to eat," a sentiment which so astounded a French epicure that he exclaimed, with a look of amazement, "*Mon Dieu !* what on earth then should we live for?" In the same class should be placed such wholesome maxims as, "Much meat, much maladies," "More meat, less manners," "Spare dinner, spare doctor," and "Too much pudding will choke a dog." Another version of the order to keep the doctor off by habitual moderation at table is, "Feed sparingly, and defy the physician."

Akin to these adages in favour of temperance are the maxims which prefer a homely diet, with contentment, to the luxurious fare of high tables. Folk-

lore declares "Dry bread at home is better than roast meat abroad," a statement deficient in truth, whether it be taken literally or figuratively. Some poor fellows, like Jeremy Taylor's hen-pecked husband, have found dry bread abroad better than roast meat at home. In like manner we are told, "A bean at liberty is better than a comfit in prison," whereto the distressingly prosaic Lord North is said to have remarked that he should not care to eat a comfit out of prison, a critical objection to be coupled with that of another lover of plain speech, who, on hearing it said "He that eats the king's goose shall be choked with the feathers," confessed he could not see how that could be, as the feathers of a goose were never brought to table. It may be left to the antiquaries to dispute whether this adage of warning against the perils of intercourse with monarchs dates from the time when the king's goose, like his peacock, was often served in its hackel. The proverb which declares the goose a foolish bird has been mentioned in an earlier chapter.

Some of the old sayings about meals are unsocial, whilst others are of sordid meanness. None but a churl was the first to remark, "Scald not your lips with another man's pottage," as though a friendly meal at a neighbour's board must necessarily occasion harm ; and none but a sponging parasite struck

out the miserly saying, "The wholesomest meat is at another's man's cost," a mode of regarding hospitality, by-the-by, which Sheridan relieved of abject niggardliness, and clothed with piquant humour, when he said he could drink with advantage any "given quantity" of wine. Again, there is scarcely more of truth than of swinish voracity in "The belly is not filled with fair words," which is only an unmannerly version of "Apologies butter no parsnips," and "Great boast and small roast make unsavoury mouths."

The disorder and defective service which usually distinguished the grand feasts of olden time are commemorated in such proverbs as "There is no great banquet but some fare ill," and "The more the merrier, the fewer the better cheer." But however large the company, or scanty the provision, at least one humble contributor to the merriment received proper attention. The ubiquitous fiddler had his proverbial "fare: meat, drink, and money," whoever else was put off with short commons. Of mirth, by the way, there was seldom any deficiency at the popular festivals of olden time. "Better be meals many than one too merry," observed a philosopher who had learnt from experience that excessive hilarity was apt to generate broils.

Whilst folk-lore urged men to be moderate

feeders for their health's sake, it was not less particular in commending abstinence for economical reasons. "A fat housekeeper made lean executors;" and "A fat kitchen, a lean will." At the same time it was better for a man to ruin himself by lavish hospitality and incessant feasting than by extravagance in costume. "Silks and satins put out the kitchen fire." "To pinch the belly in order to flatter the back," was derided by our forefathers as a course of egregious vanity that Frenchmen might take, but Englishmen should avoid.

Some of our old sayings about particular meats convey good counsel, or illustrate ancient usages of the table, though it must be confessed that a few of them fail to support the assertion that a proverb is the wit of one man and the wisdom of many. Notice has already been taken of the wholesome advice given in "He that would live for aye must eat sage (or salad) in May." There is truth in the adage, "Like lips like lettuce: a thistle is a salad fit for an ass's mouth," another version of which is "A donkey likes thistles, *because* he is an ass." But one is at a loss to discover either wit or wisdom in "Butter is gold in the morning, silver at noon, lead at night." And how comes it, if butter is depressing at night, that an egg, whose yolk is a ball of oil, should be recommended for eating at the same time, as it is in "An egg and to bed." Why a man

should take an egg before going to bed, or go to bed immediately after taking an egg, is a question still to be answered. Lord Dundreary suggests "That he may hatch it," a suggestion worthy of that nobleman's sagacity, though not quite satisfactory. That bread-and-butter was no highly esteemed diet in olden time may be inferred from "They that have no other meat, bread-and-butter are glad to eat," the wit and wisdom of which remark may be supplemented with the well-known saying of the Princess of France, who held that when they could not get bread, people should make shift with cake. "That which will not be butter, must be made into cheese," must have originated in Suffolk, long infamous for its hard, horny, flet-milk cheeses, which Swift called "cart-wheels," and farm-labourers designate "bang." Another food for humble folk is honoured in the saying, "Good kail (*i.e.*, pottage) is half a meal," and "Poor folks are glad of pottage." With more of justice to plain, than of gallantry to well-looking women, proverbial philosophy teaches, "Prettiness makes no pottage," a sentiment that would be unobjectionable, were it not for a spiteful insinuation against the pretty girls who, in language which Lord Justice Knight Bruce might have used, may rejoin, "But to make good pottage it is not necessary that a woman should be ugly." To the honour of deer's flesh, and in apology



for inferior viands, our ancestors used to say, "All flesh is not venison," a sententious truism whose style was borrowed from "All flesh is grass," which Lady Lytton parodied with "All man is beast," in a novel that she wrote to the annoyance of her husband. The one small grain of truth which lurks in the great lie, "The nearer the bone the sweeter the meat," appears in the fact that the outer slice of a roast is drier and less tasteful than the interior meat. The adage, however, is in favour with domestic economists who like to scrape every scrap of food from their ribs of beef, and who, of course, approve the saying, "When the shoulder of mutton is going, it is good to take a slice." A different opinion was held of this poor joint by the clubswell who, in one of "Punch's" old volumes, observed languidly that he had always thought it the material used for making glue. More humour and critical knowledge appear in the statement, "A shoulder of veal has twenty and two good bits," *i.e.*, twenty-two pieces, of which only two are good. All the cuts of leg of mutton were esteemed, except one, the first, "The cut that is worst of a leg is the first." The love of solids, and the corresponding disdain for whipped sillabubs and other frothy trifles, are expressed in "There's no deceit in a bag-pudding." "Two plum-puddings are better than one," cannot be older than the beginning of the

eighteenth, or the end of the seventeenth century, when plum-puddings first became universally popular. It is needless to remind the reader of Misson's remarks on the English passion for pudding, which gave birth to the phrase, "In time for pudding," *i.e.*, for dinner. But the best of all our ancestors' saws about pudding is the second line of the couplet, in which a practical cook declared her contempt for the rules and theories of cookery-books,

"Oh, bother your books and all their receipting,  
*The proof of the pudding is in the eating.*"

After pudding comes cheese, and, says proverbial wisdom, "After cheese comes nothing," an adage which might have been adduced in illustration of our remarks on the service of cheese at dessert. "Bread with eyes, and cheese with eyes" must have attained proverbial dignity in the days of universal prejudice against unleavened bread, and general ignorance of Gruyère cheese.

Though old folk-lore admitted that "a bit in the morning was better than nothing all day long," and that a diet of light meals taken frequently was efficacious for bringing the lean to condition ("Often and little eating makes a man fat"), it seldom spoke civilly of mere "snacks," which none but children should be encouraged to take:—"A child and a

chicken must always be picking." Sayings of modern folk-lore, "If I were to fast for my life, I would eat a good breakfast in the morning," and, "He that would eat a good dinner, let him eat a good breakfast," are probably not older than the eighteenth century. The meals honoured by folk-lore were dinner and supper, the mid-day dinner, after which the husbandman *rested awhile* before resuming his labour; and six o'clock supper, which he followed up by *running a mile* to call on his neighbours, or join in the sports of the common-green. The dinner, especially commended by frugal makers of proverbs, was a meal of few dainties and short duration:—"Dinners cannot be long where dainties want." In their meanest and most parsimonious temper they would add, "He that saveth his dinner will have more for supper." It was of the six o'clock supper that folk-lore remarked, "Who goes to bed supperless, all night tumbles and tosses." Our grandfathers knew right well that the rear-supper was not conducive to "sweet repose."

Folk-lore is especially didactic, and slightly garrulous on demeanour at table. "Meat is much, but manners are more," said the proverbial wise-acres, who insisted that at meals children—not only little children, but all persons whose parents or guardians were present—should be "seen and

not heard." Even the elders of a party were enjoined to be orderly and discreet in their speech. "It was good to be merry at meat," but good manners enjoined people to be *wise* as well as *merry*. Uproarious hilarity was highly reprehensible. "None," said the mannerists, "but fools and fiddlers sing at their meat." "Cease your chatter and mind your platter," and "The ass that bays most eats least," were two of several sayings by which they taught people to refrain from superfluous conversation, whilst performing the most serious business of the day. There were times at table when a wise man should be slow to speak, but none when he should be slow to satisfy his hunger. "Never be ashamed to eat your meat." It was good manners, and at the same time good policy, in a host to give the tit-bits of a joint to the guest who had contributed it to the feast—"Who gives the capon, give him the leg and wing," or, according to another version of the same rule, "The wing with the liver for him who's the giver." It was execrably bad manners for a company to eat up all the fare, leaving nothing for the servants. "He," says an old saw, "can give little to his servant who licks his own trencher." The remnants of a feast, which came as official perquisites to the servants, were called "manners;" and they were rated as "good manners," or "bad manners," in

proportion as they exhibited consideration or disregard, on the part of the feasters, for the feelings and just claims of servitors. It was bad manners to take the last piece but one from a dish; and *extremely* bad manners for a guest to take the very last. The spinster, guilty of the former offence, would not marry for a year; guilty of the latter outrage, she would die an old maid, and afterwards "lead apes in hell." Jack Sprat and his wife were an harmonious and mutually accommodating couple; but they were vulgar people. Had they lived in good society, the one might have loved fat and the other have loved lean, but they would not have licked their platters clean.

Housekeepers were admonished to "go early to the fish-market and late to the shambles," in order to get a good choice of the more perishable food, and buy odd pieces of flesh-meat for a trifle more than a song. Cooks were told that "fish make no broth," a saying which must have arisen in a recent time, for, as we have seen, the old English were habitual makers of fish-potage. They were also instructed that "he who would have a hare for breakfast must hunt overnight," by which maxim, for the benefit of improvident housekeepers, we are reminded of *the* sentiment which cannot be found in Mrs. Glasse's "Cookery Book." Prudence and contentment are inculcated by the adage, "If thou



hast not a capon, feed on an onion ;” and whilst telling people to cut their clothes according to their cloth, and to live within their means, folk-lore urged them to be content with thin porridge if they could not afford thick. At the same time, when they had abundance they might fare abundantly, “He who hathe much pease may put more in the pot.” In restraint of profuseness, the common fault of hosts in the olden time, folk-lore said, “New meat needs new appetite.” It had also excellent maxims for cooks, who were enjoined to be clean, good-tempered, and mindful of their fires, which should be clear and smokeless. “He who boils his pot with chips, makes his broth smell of smoke.” There were only three things that a nice feeder might take from a cook, deficient in the virtue which Wesley placed next to godliness : “An apple, an egg, and a nut, you may eat after a slut.” Whilst ladies were bound to keep their tempers “e’en though china fell,” the model cook was required to be cheerful under every mishap and vexation. She might not “cry over spilt milk,” or wax impatient at the churn. She was told, “Don’t swear, or the butter won’t come.” The pot would never boil if she stood over it fretting and fuming because the liquor was so slow to “simper” and bubble : “The watched pot boileth not.” The only sharp and sour thing about her should be the

sauce which she puts to sweet meat; "Sweet meat must have sour sauce." Folk-lore even went so far as to declare "Good cooks always have good tempers," an egregiously untrue statement, for clever and zealous cooks, like all nervous workers whose employment involves much anxiety and frequent disappointments, are a highly irritable class. As a general rule, it may be asserted confidently that good cooks never have perfect or fairly smooth tempers. Acting on this rule as though it had no exceptions, a famous epicure, on examining candidates for the vacant chiefship of his kitchen, used to open each examination with the inquiry, "Have you a good temper?" If the candidate replied "yes," the questioner rejoined, "Then be off with you; for you can't be a good cook." In defence of his process, this eccentric epicure used to say, "Good cooks *always* have execrable tempers; and, what is more, they are so proud of their defect that nothing would induce a competent chef to avow himself a good-tempered fellow."

For the most part a rigid, and even stingy, economist of good things taken from larder and buttery, folk-lore, with all its dislike of wastefulness and its disposition towards frugality, now and then affords us a liberal maxim. For instance, whilst respecting the rights of servants to manners, it tells

us to “Take heed of enemies reconciled and meat twice boiled.” From another of its precepts it may be inferred that the parsimonious housekeeper had better serve his recooked meats in the first course. The *réchauffé*, which opens a feast, may escape suspicion and even win approval; for, says folk-lore, “the first dish pleaseth all.”

## CHAPTER XIV.

## EPICURES.

“La digestion est l'affaire de l'estomac, et les indigestions sont celle des médecins.”—ALMANACH DES GOURMANDS.

“La table est le seul endroit où l'on ne s'ennuie jamais pendant la première heure.”—PHYSIOLOGIE DU GOUT.

“Je veux que la mort me frappe  
 Au milieu d'un grand repas;  
 Qu'on m'enterre sous la nappe  
 Entre quatre larges plats,  
 Et que sur ma tombe on mette  
 Cette courte inscription,  
 ‘Ci-gît le premier poète  
 Mort d'une indigestion.’”

“AUSSITÔT QUE LA LUMIÈRE.”

“**L**E plaisir de table,” says Brillat-Savarin, “est de tous les âges, de toutes les conditions, de tous les pays, et de tous les jours; il peut s’associer à tous les autres plaisirs, et reste le dernier pour nous consoler de leur perte.” If the sterner sex has furnished us with the most brilliant examples of devotion to good cheer, not a few women have distinguished themselves by epicurean daintiness. Though fastidious gulosity exhibits itself most strikingly in riper age, the appetite for food, naturally active in vigorous and quickly growing

creatures, is sometimes united in tender children with precocious discernment and significant enthusiasm. There are parents who on moral grounds foster daintiness in their nurseries, arguing that children are less prone to gluttony in proportion to their taste for elegant "gourmandise."

Grimod de la Reynière mentions with approval a little girl who, on hearing her father question whether hearty eating was more productive of happiness than dainty feeding, observed gravely and thoughtfully, "For myself, papa, I prefer to be dainty, for so I preserve my hunger." The sire had cause to exult in the child who could see thus clearly that hunger should be trifled with rather than satisfied, that it was a blessing to be preserved rather than an inconvenience to be extinguished. So intelligent and temperate a damsel can scarcely have been the sister of the greedy little boy who, according to Brillat-Savarin, wept bitterly and loudly towards the close of a grand meal. "My dear boy, what is the matter?" asked one of the elder guests at the table. "I cannot eat any more," responded the young glutton. "Well, well," rejoined the senior gourmand pitifully, "dry your tears, my brave lad, and fill your pockets." Instead of deriving comfort and diversion of thought from this kindly suggestion, the sufferer, uttering a yet louder wail of anguish, exclaimed, "I can't, I can't, they are full



already." By the way, a version of this story may be found in a memoir of Beau Brummell by a serious tract-writer who, having treated the incident as an occurrence of the Beau's childhood, insists that the boy's subsequent frivolity and worldliness were the logical results of the parental indulgence which only laughed at the greediness that should have been corrected with a whipping.

Brillat-Savarin insisted that "gourmandise" was becoming in women. Agreeing with the delicacy of their organs, it gave them liberal compensation for certain pleasures denied to their sex. He maintains that a lovely woman never looks more lovely than when "under arms," sitting in full toilet at a brightly-furnished table, and putting between the mobile lips of her saucy mouth the viands and wines that, raising at the same time the brilliancy of her eyes and the warmer tints of her delicate complexion, animate her to scatter sparkling railleries around her during the intervals between courses.

Alexandre Dumas was scarcely justified in attributing Eve's great disobedience to gastronomic desire, but he had sufficient authority for placing Queen Anne of England amongst modern women famous for their patronage of the "generous art." Whilst our cookery-books of the eighteenth century preserve this sovereign's culinary services from oblivion by their receipts for made dishes and

sweets “after Queen Anne’s fashion;” one of the unfeminine propensities attributed to her by scandalous gossip is commemorated in the saying which, with piquant reference to the position of her statue before St. Paul’s Cathedral, likens the habitual tippler to “Queen Anne, who turns her back on the church, and looks towards the wine-shop.” Champagne was the favourite wine in which Her Majesty is said to have indulged with habitual freedom. In justice, however, to this queen of proverbial deadness, it should be observed that the impeachment of her sobriety is sustained by no conclusive evidence. Free livers delight to attribute their own failings to great people who are free from them. Till Lord Stanhope relieved Pitt’s fame of groundless aspersions of drunkenness, it suffered from Porson’s drunken epigrams, and the idle tales of pot-loving detractors. In like manner Friedrich Wilhelm the Fourth of Prussia, who, to use Mr. Hepworth Dixon’s words, while eating (on account of his malady) enough for a giant, drank no more than a child, suffered from the inventions of the malicious humour that nick-named him Cliquot, and proclaimed him the greatest drunkard of Europe. Possibly, Queen Anne’s posthumous renown as a petticoated toss-pot is due to the wit of some French tourist in London who, after visiting St. Paul’s, wrote a saucy paragraph about the royal lady, “qui

tourne le dos à l'église et qui regarde le marchand de vin." Anyhow, her fame in this respect would have fared none the worse had her statue looked towards the tea-shop at one, instead of the public-house at another corner of the churchyard.

Whilst preserving the libellous proverb against our queen, the Parisians have also a similar saying to a saint's discredit. When their best restaurants stood in the *Rue aux Oies* (corrupted to *Rue aux Ours*) the Parisians used to say of any *gourmet*, "Voilà un homme qui a le nez tourné à la friandise, comme Saint Jacques de l'Hôpital," because the saint's statue over the entrance to the hospital looked down the *traiteurs'* thoroughfare.

Whilst ascetic scholars have invented half-a-hundred offensive definitions of "gourmand" and "gourmandise," philologists, with a taste for material pleasures, or with proper charity for human frailties, have exercised no little ingenuity in explaining the terms with equal precision and courtesy. In the "*Synonymes*," the Abbé Roubaud distinguished between the "gourmand," the "goinfre," the "goulu," and the "glouton." Disdaining to contemplate the excesses of these three last-named species of devourers, gastronomy concerns itself only with the interests of "the gourmand," of whose pursuit Brillat-Savarin remarks, "'Gourmandise' is the exercise of judgment, by which we accord preference to things that

are agreeable to the taste, over things that lack this quality." But according to Grimod de la Reynière, to merit the lofty appellation of "un vrai gourmand" it is necessary that a man should be something more than a large consumer and intelligent connoisseur of good cheer. "Your true *gourmand* is not merely one who eats with profundity, choice, reflection, and sensuality, who leaves nothing in plate or in glass, who never wounds his host with a refusal, or his neighbour with sobriety. He should unite with a vigorous appetite the jovial spirit, in whose absence the best feast is but a mournful sacrifice. Ever quick at repartee, he should hold in continual activity all the senses with which a bountiful nature has endowed him. Lastly, his memory should be stored with a multitude of anecdotes, stories, and amusing tales, which he brings forth in the intervals of the courses, and the brief pauses between meats, so that his less indulgent companions may, perforce, pardon his appetite." Dividing the epicures of the polite table into three distinct species, later writers distinguish between the *gourmand* proper, who is alike exacting of quantity and quality, the *gourmet* who, with no power to assimilate a vast measure of nutriment, is far more gustful than voracious, though indifferent to quantity, and the *friand*, who surpassing the *gourmet* in delicacy of palate and in physical intolerance of

massive refreshment, derives all his delights from tit-bits and subtle flavours. Of course it is often difficult to decide to which of these classes an epicure belongs. The *friand* will sometimes dine as heartily as a *gourmet*, and in certain moods the *gourmet*, unmindful of his physical limitations, will execute feats of "true gourmandise." At seasons of sorrow, or of harassing anxieties, a *gourmand* may be mistaken for a *gourmet*, or even for a *friand*.

Possessing all facial signs of a true *gourmand*, mentioned by Brillat-Savarin, broad face, sparkling eyes, small forehead, full lips, and round chin, Monsieur Aze possessed in remarkable perfection all endowments that Grimod de la Reynière required in a *bon-vivant*. To an almost insatiable appetite and incomparable digestion, he united a fine wit, a fine palate, and fine manners. To this remarkable man we are indebted for the Gastronomic "Code," the excellence and justice of whose provisions are apparent even to those who would not venture to enforce them. It was Monsieur Aze who decreed that to fail in keeping an engagement for dinner was an offence for which the delinquent should forfeit five hundred francs to the disappointed host. By giving forty-eight hours' notice of his inability to fulfil his engagement, the offender might, however, reduce the penalty of his breach of promise to three hundred francs. Another of this legislator's enact-



ments forbade a guest to slander his host, until a certain time had elapsed since his regalement, the time for forbearing from defamatory speech varying in proportion to the goodness of the repast. By a fairly good dinner, an *Amphitryon* could purchase security for eight clear days from the slanderous proclivities of the guests at his table. By a repast of superlative excellence, he could extend the period of safety from lying tongues to six months. But no dinner, however costly and complete, could oblige a guest to refrain for more than half a year from the pleasure of calumniating its giver. Thus by entertaining all his friends once in every six months, a competent and lavish host could maintain a blameless character in the circle of his private acquaintance. As *M. Aze* justly observed, it is impossible to conceive a more agreeable process for achieving an equally difficult and desirable end. An utterer of many wise sayings, *M. Aze* demonstrated his title to be honoured as the prophet of the dinner-table, when he observed in a happy moment that it was better to get drunk on wine than on ink, because the former was less black.

It is noteworthy that whilst epicures of the highest order are always persons of considerable intellect, some of the world's brightest geniuses have been signally devoid of gastronomic percep-

tion. Though he was a great eater, especially of breakfasts, Walter Scott's palate was so devoid of sensibility, that he preferred cold whisky and water to the most delicate wines, and could relish inferior viands as keenly as meats of the finest quality. With the exception of Leigh Hunt and Tom Moore, England has not produced during the last hundred years a single author, chiefly famous for his poetry, who may be named amongst eminent epicures. When he was not impairing a naturally delicate constitution with drastic medicines and protracted fasts, Byron would sometimes eat and drink excessively; but he ate like a greedy school-boy, and drank sottishly. Shelley cared more for fruit than the masterpieces of cookery. Southey was content with a joint and potato. Wordsworth fared throughout life as simply and moderately as a school-girl, and would have refused with scornful disgust an invitation to eat for the sake of eating. Had he been thrown with epicures in his early manhood, Coleridge might have developed a taste for delicate feeding that would have defended him against the particular sensuality which torpedied his palate, long before it exhausted the sources of his nervous energy.

Strenuous exercise of the brain may be regarded as hostile to the physical conditions that generate gastronomic faculty. Though men of letters are

seldom averse to material pleasures, and are generally credited with a disposition to social indulgence, literary biography affords but few examples of sincere devotion to gulosity. Theodore Hook and free livers of his hilarious type must be classed with the convivial toppers, rather than with the nice connoisseurs of good cheer. Johnson used to question the man's judgment on more important matters whom he found indifferent to eating; and it was his vanity to think himself an epicure. But the doctor's gastronomic experiences were homely and inartistic. Often a glutton, and never a nice feeder, he showed himself no "vrai gourmand" by his inability to see that eating was the highest of all subjects. Our finest *gourmets* of the literary class have been such amateurs of letters as "Anastasius" Hope and Plumer Ward, who merely played with the pen instead of living by it. A few of our regular authors have, however, been genuine *gourmets*. Lord Lytton and Thackeray, for instance, were gastronomers of a high order. The same may be said of the author of "The Art of Dining," who possesses in a remarkable degree all the mental, moral and physical endowments of the polite epicure.

Brillat-Savarin was of opinion that whilst practical *gourmets*, and persons qualified by nature for gastronomic excellence, could be recognized at a

glance by the physical signs already mentioned, it was easy to distinguish people naturally incapable of the finer enjoyments of gust, by their long faces, long noses, large eyes, and slimness of bodily formation. "Whatever their height," he says, "they always have in their *tournure* a character of elongation. They have black and straight hair, and are, above all, deficient in *embonpoint*: it is they who invented trousers. The women whom nature has afflicted with the same misfortune are angular, get tired at table, and live on tea and scandal." Though not devoid of justice and nice observation, these assertions must, however, be regarded as general statements, to be modified by numerous exceptions.

The author of the "Physiologie du Goût" divided his gastronomic "incapables" into two classes—the persons with tongue and palate "badly provided with nerves for inhaling and appreciating flavours;" and the persons who, whilst suffering under no local defect analogous to blindness and deafness, cannot concentrate their attention on their food, by reason of their general excitability or their inordinate devotion to other interests. This second class includes trivial chatter-boxes, men of urgent affairs, highly irritable natures, and everyone who is less the master than the slave of a morbidly active brain.

The first Napoleon, by turns abstemious and gluttonous, was denied the pleasures of the high "gourmandise" by his irritability and devotion to affairs. He would work in his cabinet for many hours without taking food; and then to appease an appetite, which never made itself felt without requiring immediate satisfaction, he would burden himself with large meals, devoured ravenously. Indigestion necessarily resulted from this savage practice; and the mind that subdued the Continent was often clouded by the derangement of organs which avenged their wrongs on the brain that had insolently denied them proper consideration. It is not more obvious to Victor Hugo that Waterloo was lost through the fall of rain which hindered the movements of the French artillery, than manifest to gastronomers that some of the great captain's darkest reverses are attributable to his barbarous maltreatment of his stomach. His success at Borodino would have been unquestionable, had the chieftain been prudently submissive to his chef. Leipsic would not have been lost had the great "tête d'armée" rendered proper homage to the source of its vigour. The triumphs of Dresden would not have closed in disaster, if the Emperor had not stupefied himself with shoulder of mutton and onion-sauce.

Unlike Napoleon, the cold and wary Wellington



did not neglect his health in his devotion to supreme interests. Eating moderately but sufficiently throughout his campaigns, he never lost field or gun through dyspepsia. But he was even more averse than the Emperor to epicurean indulgence. No cook ever won from him a sign of satisfaction with a dish. The natural infirmity of his tongue and palate rendered him absolutely indifferent to the flavours of viands. "Thank you, it was good enough; but I really don't care what I eat," he replied to an inquiry for his opinion of a dish so superlatively excellent that his host Talleyrand (or, as some insist, Cambacérès) was perplexed by the silence and unobservant air of the courtly soldier. "Not care what you eat!" he rejoined, with undisguised astonishment, "not care what you eat! Then, why on earth have you come here?" A version of this anecdote, which has been told in a score different ways, may be found in Lord Lytton's "Pelham."

But though he was no *gourmet*, and was disastrously neglectful of his personal interest in good cheer, Napoleon had a proper respect for cookery as an instrument of government. On despatching the Abbé de Pradt to Poland, he observed impressively, "Tenez bonne table et soignez les femmes;" and the supreme duty of his famous arch-chancellor Cambacérès, was to maintain a kitchen and table

for the furtherance of state affairs. On dismissing high plenipotentiaries, after a satisfactory conference, he would say in his most gracious manner, "Go and dine with Cambacérès." In illustration of prodigal expenditure for the arch-chancellor's table, a story is told of a trout sent to it from Geneva, for which the municipal authorities of that city charged 300 francs. Thinking that £12 (of English money) was an extortionate price for a single trout, the Imperial *Cour des Comptes* disallowed the payment; the immediate result of which interference was a sharp reproof from the Emperor, who bade his officers of the *Cour* to forbear for the future from vexatious economy in matters pertaining to his chancellor's table. Had the Emperor been as considerate as he was liberal to his official entertainer, the latter would have been spared many annoyances. But the autocrat, who gave no heed to the clock or his own bodily needs, when affairs of moment occupied his attention, was equally careless of his chancellor's feelings and hospitable arrangements. Sometimes Cambacérès was summoned abruptly to the Tuileries within a few minutes of the hour fixed for a grand dinner at his own table. At other times, he was detained at the palace for hours, whilst he knew that his cook was deploring the destruction of an exquisite repast, and that his guests for the day were enduring the torments of hunger. On one of

these occasions, when the course to be taken with the Duc d'Enghien had been the subject of tedious discussion at the Council Board, Cambacérès was seen to pen a hasty note and give it to a gentleman usher for immediate delivery. Unfortunately, the chancellor's act did not escape the notice of the Emperor, who desired to know the contents of the missive. With an affected air of unconcern, Cambacérès explained that the note referred only to a private and personal matter; but the assurance, far from satisfying the Emperor, only stimulated his curiosity. So the note was handed to His Majesty, who read it aloud, "Gardez les entremets, les rôtis sont perdus." It is needless to add that the billet was directed to the arch-chancellor's chef.

It was an hour of evil consequence to the arch-chancellor's fame, when he was so imprudent as to differ with Carème on a question of account, and rouse thereby the implacable resentment of that eminent artiste. Had he exhibited to Carème a little of the forbearance which he never failed to display to his Imperial master, Cambacérès might have gone down to posterity as the finest *gourmet* of the first Empire. But alas! for a reputation so laboriously achieved, and so intemperately squandered over a paltry dispute about a few hundred wretched francs, it is questionable whether Napoleon's official entertainer

was aught better than a gluttonous and niggardly impostor. No man is a hero to his valet. No man lives in the esteem of the cook whom he has discharged with imputations of dishonesty. If Carème may be credited, the arch-chancellor was no true gourmand in the true sense of the term, but only a gross, and even voracious feeder (*fort gros mangeur, et même vorace*). A greedy devourer of highly-seasoned and vulgar messes, he gorged himself with dishes only calculated to disgust the refined epicure. “*Pourrait-on croire,*” exclaims Carème, “*qu’il préférerait à tous les mets le pâté chaud aux boulettes, plat lourd, fade et bête ?*” Every morning of his life this gastronomic humbug expended curious care on the arrangement of his table, but only with the despicable purpose of cutting down its proper expenses, for the gratification of his avaricious spirit. He kept a minute record of all culinary provisions sent to him from the provinces, as though he were a mere huckster. He kept the key of the larder in which they were stored, and never gave out a head of game, a fish, or joint of meat without a frugal consideration of its weight and the requirements of the occasion on which it would be served. Often, out of sheer miserliness, he kept *matériel* under lock and key till it was unfit for consumption. Even worse, he would consume at his solitary dinners the “remains” of stately ban-

quets. "Just heaven!" the cook exclaims, with equal fervour and amazement, "what a dinner for a prince and eminent gastronomer!" Not that Carème disdained to utilize the remnants of a feast. On the contrary, he was ever ready to turn them to account, but with caution and in secrecy. "La desserte," he justly observes, "ne doit être employée qu'avec précaution, habileté, *et surtout en silence.*" The same ham was served at the arch-chancellor's board day after day for an entire week; and the miserable fellow grudged the chief officers of his kitchen the refreshment of a bottle of Bordeaux. Of course the reader of these accusations must make large allowance for the accuser's prejudice and vehement animosity. But though they are violent *ex parte* statements, it cannot be denied that they proceed from a witness who was singularly qualified to form a correct estimate of the arch-chancellor's gastronomic pretensions, and who would have been slow to tarnish his own fame by covering a former patron with charges which "society" would know to be altogether false.

Carème contrasts the meanness of Cambacérès with the liberality of George the Fourth, Lord Castlereagh, the Emperor Alexander, and Talleyrand. If his spirits were depressed by the clouds and fog of our humid climate, they were cheered by the considerateness and courtesies of his English



patrons. In Russia he was, or imagined himself, an object of especial concern to his imperial employer and the august circle, for whose delight he produced his finest and most original compositions.

But Talleyrand was the *gourmet* whom Carême delighted to honour, as the first gastronomer of Europe and of history. The general opinion of culinary *savans* concurs with the cook's high estimate of this princely diplomatist and feeder, whose dinner taken with composure—at eight o'clock when he was in Paris, and at five during his residences in the country—was his only meal in the course of each twenty-four hours. Having drunk at the opening of the day two or three cups of camomile tea, which acted as a gentle tonic on his digestive organs, the Prince received the many persons who had claims on his attention. When he had dismissed the diplomatic agents and politicians who thronged his *levée*, he summoned to his cabinet the chief officers of his kitchen, and deliberated calmly on their proposals. If their suggestions involved any startling project, or even any trivial modification of a gastronomic rule, each of the assembled artistes was invited to state his opinion on the doubtful question fearlessly and frankly. It was not till he had heard the arguments on both sides that the Prince delivered judgment in

language which, though excellently lucid and precise, was studiously devoid of expressions likely to wound the susceptibilities of the gentle ministrants. Sometimes he condescended to taste a new sauce, or witness the practical illustration of a new culinary method; but on these occasions he barely tasted the novelty, lest, whilst informing his palate, he should blunt the edge of appetite.

A similar picture has been given of Louis, Count Zinzendorf, the bearer of a name scarcely less illustrious in gastronomic story than in the annals of pietism. Unlike the Count of his family who afforded the Moravian brethren an asylum in Upper Lusatia, and after introducing their doctrines to England died at Chelsea in 1760, the statesman and epicure of this story was more studious for his body's pleasure than his soul's welfare. For many years he kept the best table in Vienna, and during the plenitude of his influence he always spared an hour of each mid-day for a conference with his chief cook. For her knowledge of this interesting fact, history is indebted to the prying tourist who, by bribing one of the Count's pages, gained access to the dark closet, where he witnessed the following drama through the keyhole of a door. The spy saw a stately chamber in which the Count was walking to and fro, his arms crossed over his breast, and his countenance wearing a meditative air. Having

paced the room's length several times, the great Minister unfolded his arms, and seating himself in a lounge-chair that stood in the middle of the room, rung a silver hand-bell. A minute later there entered a page, bearing a glass and a white napkin; a second courtly servitor, carrying a silver salver, that was furnished with several pieces of bread; and a famous chef, carrying another salver on which were several vessels containing the gravies and sauces selected for the Count's dinner. When the page had put the napkin over the Count's cravat and coat-lappets, and the footman had taken a convenient position near his master, the chef brought up the sauces, one by one, stating briefly as he presented it the special purpose for which each was designed. Having tasted each of the compounds, and conferred gravely with his chef on their characteristics as well as on other questions of culinary moment, the Count returned to affairs of state, and to the quarter of his palace where he received his visitors. The spectator of this droll scene tells us that the Count was very careful to clear his palate with bread and water after tasting a sauce, so that he might render critical justice to the next preparation.

A man of patrician connexions, Grimod de la Reynière was of plebeian birth. The nephew of Malesherbes, and the uncle of Count D'Orsay, he was the son of a *fermier-général*, who purchased

nobility when he had amassed a prodigious fortune, and the grandson of a pork-butcher whose highest distinctions were won in his inglorious vocation. A malicious destiny decreed that a furious hog should avenge the wrongs of his race on the person of this pork-butcher's grandchild. The future epicure and editor of the famous *Almanach des Gourmands* was still an infant, when he was deprived of the greater part of both his hands by the savage boar. That he could, on attaining manhood, conceal the disfigurements consequent on this accident from casual observers, was not more due to the ingenious contrivances of surgeons, than to the intelligence and perseverance with which he trained the mutilated parts to muscular pliancy. But the injuries which he strove to disguise excluded him from the profession of arms. Forbidden by a cynical fate to wield the sword, he comforted himself by learning how to use a pen and handle a knife and fork. The successes of the writer and epicure are more brilliant, and promise to be more enduring than any he could have achieved in military service. Whilst his gastronomic inventions place him in the first rank of discoverers, his gastronomic writings have long been the marvel of scholars and the model of scribes. The Duke, whose wisdom and virtues are fitly commemorated in our capital by the column that bears his name, used to declare that, with the

single exception of the Bible, the world contained no better book than the "Almanach des Gourmands."

It may seem ungenerous to allude to the failings of so great a benefactor of our species; but generosity should not fail in thoughtfulness even for those who are strangers to the virtue. For their satisfaction, therefore, let it be observed that Grimod, faultless in everything which relates to feeding, was not perfect in every relation of life. The incongruity of his ancestral humility and parental opulence infused him with a perverse humour, often observed in the inheritors of a fortune that just falls short of perfect felicity. It had inspired him with more of animosity to the immediate authors of his life, than of gratitude to them as the creators of his enviable prosperity. Certainly, he cannot be exhibited to young minds as a model of filial devotion. Whilst his parents, after the fashion of the newly-enriched, ranged themselves with the obsequious worshippers of the aristocracy, the younger Grimod declared himself a child of the *canaille*, and displayed whimsical ingenuity in reminding his father and mother of their vulgar extraction. It was his pleasure to bring ridicule on them by burlesquing the awkward gestures with which they rendered servile homage to the great people who condescended to enter their salons. The father had scarcely performed an obeisance to a duke of ancient lineage when the



son would divert a circle of spectators by approaching the dignitary with bowings and grimaces that caricatured the *fermier-général's* movements of reverence.

Whilst the old people prided themselves on the patrician quality of the guests who thronged the reception-rooms of their hotel, their son persisted in parodying their entertainments by inviting to his apartment, in the same mansion of the Champs Elysées, persons of plebeian style and story. On one occasion he invited a numerous party of advocates to his table, requiring that each of his guests should give proof of his plebeian birth to a laquais, stationed at the door of the *salle-à-manger*, before entering the festal room. On another occasion he entertained twenty-two of his friends at a supper served on a catafalque in a chamber hung with black cloth, and lit like a mortuary chapel with three hundred tapers. On entering the first of the anterooms that led to this chamber of death, each guest was asked by a Swiss in attendance whether he had come to dine with M. de la Reynière (père) "l'oppresseur du peuple," or with M. de la Reynière (fils) "le défenseur du peuple." On declaring contempt for the tax-gatherer, and devotion to the popular tribune, the guest was permitted to go to his place at the

catafalque, where he found an open coffin placed behind each seat.

But the younger De la Reynière's most scandalous banquet was the supper of pork and oil which he gave to the tailors, butchers, and other petty tradesmen of his father's neighbourhood. The supper comprised nine courses, each of which afforded a dish of swine's flesh, or a viand dressed profusely with oil. Savoyards, taken from the streets and dressed for the occasion in the gorgeous habiliments of mediæval heralds, waited at the table, whilst surpliced singing-boys, stationed at the four corners of the *salle-à-manger*, swung to and fro the gilded censers, whose fumes corrected the less agreeable odour of the gluttonous *canaille*. No service was removed till the defender of the people had taken occasion to call attention to some piece of *charcuterie*, as meat bought at the shop of one of his cousins, or to commend the oil of another preparation as a favourable specimen of the commodities sold by his father's brother, the *épicier* round the corner. This fooling was at its height when Monsieur and Madame de la Reynière, having arrived prematurely in Paris from the country, burst into the room where their son was amusing himself, in more than one sense, at their expense.

In his indignation the *fermier-général* procured a

*lettre de cachet*, that banished his son to Lorraine, whence the young man returned to Paris after the lapse of a few months to take possession of the wealth which had devolved on him by his sire's death. In palliation of his unfilial buffooneries, it has been suggested that the younger De la Reynière perpetrated them from motives of policy, rather than from an unnatural desire to inflict pain on his worthy parents. Anticipating the not remote future, when the lower *bourgeoisie* of the capital would be powerful to defend a fortune derived from odious taxes, he may have courted the *canaille* in the interests of the father and mother whom he covered with ridicule. Anyhow his offences against their peace of mind were advantageous to himself. The millionaire who had boasted of his descent from a line of pork-butchers, when ordinary *parvenus* blushed to avow their familiar connection with the rabble, was allowed to retain his wealth after the men of the markets had risen to power. Whilst the ancient nobility were stript of their possessions, the tax-farmer's son, who blushed for his father's affectation of patrician quality, and boasted of his grandsire's shop, escaped the general despoliation of the opulent classes.

Avoiding the excitements and perils of political contention, he reposed on his reputation for loving the people and "good cheer." Directing the gas-

tronic revolution, which his pen has described with graphic picturesqueness, he lavished money and counsel on the cooks who, on the demolition of the kitchens of the noblesse, established themselves as public *traiteurs* in the Palais Royal. Under the Empire he published his famous "Almanach." On his return from exile, Louis the Desired, found him in the fullness of his well-earned renown. Time dealt gently with the *gourmet* who, accommodating himself amiably to successive governments and changes of national sentiment, was more curious about pots than politicians. When he entertained his nephew (Count D'Orsay) and Alexandre Dumas with a charming dinner in 1834, the illustrious epicure, who had in his youth suffered exile for a libellous memoir of Fariau de Saint-Ange, was in the full enjoyment of a green old age. As his hair had whitened, his palate had attained a riper and finer subtlety. His digestion was perfect. To use the noble words of one of his many biographers, he still ate a *pâté de foie gras* as though it were a *brioche*, and swallowed *truffles* as though they were *cherries*. A few years later he languished; but to the last he preserved a romantic passion for aliments. The malady to which he eventually succumbed having constrained his physician to put him on a severely restricted diet, he was

ordered to dine off a single egg and one slice (*mouillette*) of bread. The venerable *gourmet* insisted that the egg should be large and the *mouillette* enormous. Consenting to his entreaties, the affectionate wife who shared the labours, triumphs, and honours of his useful career, provided the meagre repast in accordance with his directions. Regarding the *mouillette* with admiration, and his wife with gratitude, M. Grimod de la Reynière seized the egg, removed a part of its shell, and was in the act of sucking up the milky "white," when, alas! he sucked so energetically—one might say greedily—that he drew the entire meat between his lips. In an instant he had swallowed the yolk without tasting it. "Oh, malheur! Oh, déplorable précipitation!" says the historian, "la belle mouillette était inutile." The venerable gastronomer could not conceal his chagrin. Still worse, his exhausted energies could not recover from the shock of the humiliating disappointment. A week later he expired, leaving his works for the enlightenment, and his character for the emulation of posterity.



## CHAPTER XV.

## POLITICAL GASTRONOMY.

“Le gouvernement Anglais, que nous copions, si positif, si puissant et si vivace, a gagné considérablement d’influence sur le parlement par les dîners.”—L’ART CULINAIRE. Par le Marquis de Cussy.

“Je n’ai pas grande idée de cet homme, disait le comte de M—, en parlant d’un candidat qui venait d’attraper une place; il n’a jamais mangé de boudin à la Richelieu, et ne connaît pas les côtelettes à la Soubise.”—PHYSIOLOGIE DU GOUT.

WHILST holding Grimod de la Reynière in proper reverence, as the leader of the Parisian gastronomers for more than half a century, we should also bear in mind that he was surrounded by worthy comrades and generous rivals. Brillat-Savarin was his close friend. Who is ignorant of M. D’Aigrefeuille, whilom Procureur-Général de la Cour des Aides de Montpellier, to whom Grimod dedicated the first volume of his “Almanach?” A volume might be written on his achievements in gourmandise. The inventor of the *potage* that bears his name, he introduced “langues de bœuf à la vénitienne” to the Parisian table, and induced Baptiste to reveal the method of preparing them. The discoverer of a new process for dressing macaroni, he sometimes condescended to execute it with

his own hands for the delight of a few familiar witnesses of his skill. "Qui ne sait," Grimod remarks with fervour, "que vous possédez mieux qu'aucun amateur la recette des meilleurs macaronis : et que quiconque a mangé de ceux que vous daignez quelquefois apprêter vous-même, et de vos propres mains, pour vos amis, ne peut plus en goûter d'autres."

Who has not heard of M. d'Avaray and his method of cooking meats within meats, so that the viand intended for consumption should escape the hurtful, whilst encountering the salutary influence of the fire? Having placed a nicely trimmed and seasoned cutlet between two larger portions of tender flesh, he grilled or fried the savoury "triplet," from which the *gourmet* in due course took for his own eating the middle slice, putting aside the outer pieces, as though they were the mere shell or rind of a delicious fruit. In the same manner he cooked the ortolan, without scorching it, by putting it into the belly of a partridge, ere he submitted it to heat. The *gourmet* who could conquer difficulties by expedients so novel and elegant, deserved his place in the affections of his sovereign.

The age of D'Avaray, D'Escars, and Petit-Radel was also the age of De Cussy, whose "L'Art Culinnaire" endures comparison with the "Physiologie du Goût," and the most thoughtful essays of the

“Almanach.” Prefect of the Palace under the Empire, the Marquis de Cussy studied eating as a department of political science, and insisted that history should be written from the gastronomic point of view. To know the peoples, it was necessary to know their dishes. England should be criticized with continual reference to roast-beef, beef-steak, pudding, and porter. Holland could be understood only by a connoisseur of cheese and salt-beef. The genius of Germany lurked in sour-kROUT and sausages. Caviare afforded the clue to the mysteries of Russian policy. The “pilau” of Turkey, the “macaroni” of Italy, and the “olla-podrida” of Spain revealed the respective instincts and tendencies of the three nations. According to De Cussy, dynasties rose or fell through sympathetic devotion or sullen indifference to culinary ideas. The disasters of history were referable to dinners; and the student, who would account for the successes of statesmen, should pay more attention to the records of their kitchens than to their labours in the cabinet. The free institutions of England were the result of her liberal though rather oppressive fare: her supremacy was the work of statesmen and thinkers who, in addressing the minds, had never forgotten to humour the stomachs of their followers. Walpole governed by corruption and cookery, so nicely blended that it was impossible at times to separate the one from

the other. Holland, Chatham, North, and Addington were all statesmen of the table. Locke, Addison, Clarke, Hume and Gibbon were not more eminent as philosophers than as diners.

To readers who have never taken the gastronomic view of our parliamentary history, De Cussy's statement of the influence of hospitality on our public affairs may appear altogether fanciful; but the more enlightened perusers of this page do not need to be assured that it has an element of truth. Baptized in the loving-cup, if not born amidst revelry, government by party was quick to employ feasting as a means for the attainment of its ends. Banquets were given for political purposes—to proclaim the exultation of victors, or rally the spirits of defeated confederates—long before the time of Walpole, who only followed the example of earlier leaders, when he rewarded his staunch supporters by inviting them to his table, or won new recruits to his army with domestic blandishments. In the "Examen," Roger North tells us how for their political objects "the court and their friends came and kept company with the friendly citizens, encouraging them and countenancing them," and how the triumph of the civic Tories, in electing two sheriffs of their party, was celebrated with "great and solemn feasts," whose "no little noise gave advantage to the Whigs,

that liked not such music, to charge the Tories with brutality and extravagance."

If not heard for the first time, the "huzza" was first adopted as a Tory cry at these rejoicings over Whig misadventure. "It cannot be denied," says Roger North, "but at merry meetings good fellowship, in the way of Healths, ran into some extravagance and noise, as that which they call Huzza-ing, an Usage then at its perfection." Thirty years later the populace of Queen Anne's town were raising huzzas for Dr. Sacheverell at feasts commemorated in Dr. King's lines

"A caldron of fat beef and stoop of ale  
On the huzzaing mob shall more prevail,  
Than if you give them, with the nicest art,  
Ragouts of peacock's brains and filbert tart."

At the same time the Whigs, no longer protesting weakly and foolishly against clamorous extravagances, answered their opponents' shouts with even louder "hurrahs." Alike in the capital and the country, political action was attended with political feasting. No election was carried without a lavish expenditure in meats and buttered ale. No candidate for the suffrages of a large constituency could face it on the hustings until he had met its chiefs at private dinners, and conciliated its superior commonalty at tavern suppers. Having passed from privacy to a public station through a series of



feastings, the new member no sooner entered "the house" than he was assailed with hospitable courtesies by notable politicians, acting in the interest of ministers or of their opponents. By going straight to one of the chief houses of rendezvous for the holders of his opinions, and declining to appear at the private gatherings of their opponents, the man of clear views and steady purpose easily escaped the importunities of anglers for his influence. But the weak-knee'd politician, after sauntering through half-a-dozen coteries, was apt to associate himself closely with the one that had the best cooks and prettiest women. As Mr. Hayward observes, when speaking of the political functions of Holland House and Landsdowne House, "No one who knows anything about human nature will deny that it is of the last importance to a party to have a few noble or highly distinguished houses, where all its rank and beauty, wit, eloquence, accomplishment, and agreeability may congregate; where, above all, each young recruit of promise may be received on an apparent footing of equality, his feelings taken captive by kindness, or his vanity conciliated by flattery."

De Cussy lived in times when the English mode of cherishing political parties was largely operative in French politics. The dinners of Cambacérès in the Empire, had been preceded in the Republic by

the hospitalities of Barrère, whose table was not more esteemed for its cuisine than for its political intelligence. During his ascendancy it was commonly said that no one could understand the revolution, who had not supped with the President of the Jacobins; and whilst the kitchen was a chief force in the organisation of every political coterie, gastronomy contributed in a remarkable manner to the prosperity of the entire nation. Brillat-Savarin insists that France was indebted chiefly to her gastronomic genius for the quickness with which she recovered her trade and credit after Napoleon's fall.

At a moment when her industries had been exhausted by fiscal exactions, and when successive wars had reduced her to bankruptcy and decimated her people, the treaty of 1815 imposed upon France some fifteen hundred millions of new debt, one-half of which she was required to pay within three years. How came it, the epicure asks, that she did not perish in a vain attempt to satisfy such extortions? How that, instead of folding her hands in despair, she applied herself to the accomplishment of the apparently impossible task? Ay more, how came it that her recuperative efforts were not more heroic than successful? What power came to her aid? what divinity accomplished the miracle? History answers—La Gourmandise !

To retrieve the disasters of bloody fields, France fell back upon her kitchens. Her soldiers had perished, but, thanks to Heaven! her cooks remained. Betrayed by her generals and destiny, France was saved by the chefs and cuisine of her capital. The allied armies had no sooner entered Paris, than these marvellous artistes—men whom no disaster could crush, no reverse plunge into despair—conspired to fascinate the hostile leaders, and through them to enslave the world by an irresistible cookery. Inspired with this sublime purpose, they ran to their pots and pans with a divine enthusiasm. By day they faced joyfully the hottest fires—by night they racked their brains for new ideas, or followed up trains of thought ending in novel combinations. Not a fortnight passed ere they saw that the enemy had been given into their hands. Everywhere the soldiers of the barbaric hordes were seen to eat intently, greedily, incessantly, the dainties offered to their insatiable mouths. Whilst marshals and generals fed luxuriously and interminably in the salons of extortionate restaurateurs, colonels and subalterns consumed the scarcely inferior “plats” of elegant though cheaper *traiteurs*. The foreign soldiers who could not pay the charges of the more fashionable caterers, stuffed themselves from dawn to twilight with the viands afforded by ordinary hotel-keepers and pastrycooks.

At the same time, non-commissioned officers gorged themselves in the open streets. "Behold," the conspirators exclaimed, "they are under the charm. Daily they pay us more than we are charged daily for their maintenance. And till the grave covers these intruders, they will pay us prodigious tribute for the gratification of tastes acquired during their sojourn amongst us." It was the hour for gastronomic enterprise and speculators. Véry became a millionaire; Achard was on the way to prodigious opulence; Madame Sully, of the Palais Royal, was selling daily twelve thousand little pâtés over the counter of her small shop, scarcely twelve feet square.

The results of this gastronomic victory exceeded even the hopes of the victors. The prosperity of the *traiteurs* at once affected the several industries that are subservient directly or indirectly to "gourmandise." Yet further, whilst inspiring the French with a cheering confidence of their ability to conquer their many difficulties, it produced a universal revival of the luxurious and elegant arts. Delicate feeding creates a disposition for every kind of costly enjoyment. In the general resuscitation of her commerce and industries, France paid the seven hundred and fifty millions of indemnity in three years, and met her other obligations with admirable punctuality. In the course of time she was abun-

dantly compensated for the exactions of the conquerors by the growing demand for her cookery and wines. Men who had learnt to appreciate the works of her *traiteurs* during "the occupation," returned to Paris at least once in every few years, to renew their acquaintance with M. Achard, and to lunch in Madame Sully's shop. These *gourmets*, in their visits to the French capital, were often accompanied by wives and daughters, who enriched the jewellers and milliners of the boulevards. M. Moët, of Epernay, drew a long face when an invading army emptied his cellars of six hundred thousand bottles of wine; but he lived to congratulate himself on a loss that made champagne the favourite drink of the wealthier people of the northern nations, and immediately doubled the number of his English customers.

Whilst France was thus replacing herself amongst the first European powers, she had a Sovereign suited to her gastronomic genius, and worthy of his descent from such epicures as Louis the Well-Beloved and Louis the God-given. If *la Gourmandise* had marked him as her most devoted worshipper, by the sensuous character of his countenance and the vastness of his indolent body, he bore the inconvenient distinctions with placidity, and regarded their burden as no excessive penalty for enjoyments that had reconciled him to exile, whilst



preparing him to govern a nation of cooks. Like his brother, Louis the Sixteenth, he astounded spectators by the magnitude of his meals; but in every other gastronomic respect he differed remarkably from Marie Antoinette's husband.

Whatever his failings, it cannot be denied that Louis the Desired was a superb and most enlightened gourmand. Regarding cookery as one of the fine arts, and proclaiming it more honourable because more fruitful of enjoyment than astronomy, he was studious of delicacy and refinement in all his culinary enterprises. It was a first article of his creed that, whilst delighting the palate, every dish should also charm the eye and gratify the nerves of smell. The ornamentation of tables was a subject that engaged much of his serious attention. He was also a great discoverer. A daring experimentalist, he is one of the few royal epicures who enlarged the boundaries of human feeding, and added to the number of our alimentary sensations. Such a man could not fail to reflect with shame and abhorrence on the gastronomic depravity of his brother, who preferred pork to all other viands. He was not without grounds for thinking that Louis the Sixteenth's downfall and ignominious death were chiefly due to the popular disdain for his gross gluttony. It is certain that the degraded Bourbon roused no sentiment in his favour by gorging himself with

roast pullets on the 10th of August, whilst the Convention was considering his appeal for protection. Camille Desmoulins taught the Parisian populace to believe that the royal fugitive would have escaped from France had he not tarried on the way to the frontier to feast on pig's feet. The mob that shrieked around the scaffold, whilst the desperate glutton and coward screamed for mercy and struggled with his executioners, were aware that his most strenuous complaints of his treatment in the Temple related to the restrictions of his diet.

In palliation of Louis the Sixteenth's gluttony, it may, however, be pleaded that it was an hereditary disease, and would probably have escaped universal opprobrium had it not been divorced from the "friandise," in which the French Bourbons were rarely deficient. Louis the Well-Beloved, whom Grimod de la Reynière extols as a *gourmet* of a truly royal type, was also a prodigious *gourmand*. The same may also be said of Louis the Fourteenth, whom Dr. Doran characterises as "a very gifted feeder." The Duchess of Orleans testifies in her Memoirs that she "often saw him eat four platefuls of soups, a whole pheasant, a partridge, a plateful of salad, mutton hashed with garlic, two good-sized slices of ham, a dish of pastry, and afterwards fruit and sweetmeats."

But Louis the Great, in the fullness of his vigour, was a child at eating in comparison with the Swiss porter who fed daily at the servants' board of Marshal Villars.

"How many sirloins of beef could you eat at one sitting?" the Marshal inquired of this voracious janitor.

"Sirloins of beef!" the giant answered. "Ah, my Lord, not many—five or six at the utmost."

"And how many legs of mutton? Think, and tell the truth."

The porter declared that seven or eight large legs would satisfy his sharpest hunger.

"And how many pullets?"

The porter did not care much for pullets; a dozen were as many as he should ever wish to eat at a single meal.

"Good; and how about pigeons?"

A disdainful smile stole over the glutton's face as he replied contemptuously, "Pooh! Pigeons, pigeons! Pooh! my Lord! Forty or fifty—say fifty, if they are plump and well-dressed."

"Fifty pigeons!" rejoined the Marshal; "then you would need two or three hundred larks?"

"Larks, my Lord!" exclaimed the porter, with sudden enthusiasm. "How many larks? Oh, my Lord, I could eat larks *for ever*."

This porter would have felt it a privilege to serve

M. de Semblaçay, the Bishop of Bourges, who, for six years, ate six heavy meals a day, and yet never rose from table without appetite for another course. No less pious than gluttonous, this exemplary prelate observed to a familiar friend, "I attribute my felicitous gift of eating to my care to say grace, not only before and after each repast, but at each removal of a service." Whether the poet was equally abounding in thanks to Heaven biography omits to state, whilst recording that Alexander Lainez could enjoy a feast lasting for five or six hours, and five minutes after its last service be ready for another. "When will dinner be ready?" he once asked his servant immediately after a hearty repast. On hearing that he had just dined at unusual length, he answered sadly and thoughtfully, "Indeed, indeed; is my stomach losing its memory?" Another eminent and eccentric glutton, whose achievements are recorded in the archives of the Academy of Wirtemberg, made a handsome income for many years by eating in public. On one occasion this droll gentleman, or "ogre," as his biographers prefer to style him, amused himself by devouring a lacquered iron standish, several quill pens, and knife, seasoned to his taste with ink and sand. Having taken down these trifles, he topped up with two bushels of cherries with their stalks and stones. Nothing more astound-

ing than this exploit can be found in Mason Good's curious examples of morbid appetite, though he mentions the case of the servant-girl who made a light luncheon off a broom-stick. By the way, there still lives an American poet who diets on shavings and whittlings of wood, when his mind is delivering itself of its nobler conceptions. On one occasion, entering the study of a London friend during its owner's absence, this Transatlantic genius seated himself on an "occasional chair," with his face to its back, and taking out his whittling-knife regaled himself with the top rail. The refectation having only sharpened his appetite, he was beginning to eat another stave of polished birch, when the proprietor of the damaged seat appeared upon the scene. With excellent good-humour and politeness the host observed to his visitor, "My dear fellow, why have you refreshed yourself with such hard and indigestible fare when that sofa-pillow, stuffed with the softest of feathers, was quite at your service?"

Before it became the fashion at feasts to forewarn every guest, by a menu put near his plate, of the several provisions for his gastronomic contentment, the epicure was exposed to difficulties only to be imagined at the present day. If he partook freely of a favourite dish at the beginning, he might deprive himself of the ability to enjoy yet more delicious fare at a later stage of the proceedings. On



the other hand, if he used his first opportunity with moderation, he might have reason to regret his abstinence on finding nothing so acceptable to his palate in the subsequent services. When the Duke of Norfolk rested on his "arms" at the table of the Sublime Steaks during one of the earlier services, he knew that the super-delicious cut from the very middle of the rump, for which he was "holding back," would in due course make its appearance. But before the introduction of "menus," the epicure at a friend's table could seldom adopt the retentive policy with perfect confidence that it would prove to his advantage.

Under these circumstances arose the malicious practice of withholding the choicest viands till the too eager *gourmand* had eaten to the extreme limits of his capacity. Greedy parasites were often punished in this cruel manner by the host, who suspected them of preferring his dinners to his *jeux-d'esprit*.

Brillat-Savarin tells a story of the Chevalier de Langeac, a *bon-vivant* well known in 1780 at the best tables in Lyons, who was thus "victimized" by a wealthy banker of that city. Having conceived resentment against the Chevalier, this financier invited him to his table for dinner on a rather distant day. Inferring from the "length" of the "notice" that he was asked to a feast of

unusual ceremony and excellence, the Chevalier accepted the invitation gladly and appeared at the appointed hour. The company was numerous and brilliant, though the repast, or rather the earlier part of it, was more solid and less delicate than the Chevalier had hoped to find it. An enormous sirloin, a fricassee of pullets, and a stuffed carp constituted the first service. The second course consisted of a prodigious turkey, a pike, and six entremets. It was remarkable that the guests, with the single exception of the Chevalier, were out of appetite. This one had a sick headache, another had a chill, a third had already dined. They could pick a little; but could not eat vigorously. Accepting their excuses in good faith and comical simplicity, the Chevalier de Langeac—despite his secret dissatisfaction with the repast—threw himself on the massive dishes, and even surpassed himself in gluttony. Enjoying the infirmity of his comrades, he rallied them insolently on their incompetence. Poor imbecile! their revenge and his humiliation were at hand. As he ate they exchanged glances. At length he desisted from his assaults on the too substantial food, when he felt that he had scarcely “a corner” left in his system for a small piece of cheese at dessert. The time for his disgrace had arrived. On the removal of the second course, what was his surprise at seeing

the table relaid with fresh plate and linen? What his dismay at beholding it adorned with such delicacies as "riz de veau au coulis d'écrevisses," "des laitances aux truffes," "un brochet piqué et farci," and "des ailes de bartarellles à la purée de champignons?" What his rage at hearing the invalids declare themselves quite well again? The sufferer from "migraine" was never better. The man who complained of a chill was glowing with animation. The conspirator who had already dined was congratulating himself on having taken scarcely anything since early breakfast. For a few minutes the victim made a ghastly effort to maintain an appearance of hilarity, but the shame and ridicule of his position were not to be endured with an affectation of pleasure. On the appearance of a noble dish of snipes, he rose, his face livid and his hands trembling with rage. "Monsieur," he exclaimed to the banker, ere he rushed from the room, "you have exposed me to your friends, and you shall atone for your perfidy with your life."

A miserably weak version of this piquant but rather disagreeable story is given by the author of "Apician Morsels," (1829), who makes two English ladies perpetrate the inhospitable joke on a greedy curate, who, after feeding himself to repletion with corned beef and carrots, is constrained to witness their deliberate enjoyment of a

second banquet of "delicate entrées and beautiful game."

A third version of Brillat-Savarin's "holding back" story exhibits Pope, the actor, as the sufferer from the plot. At the invitation of an old comrade who had invited him to his table to dine in a homely way off "a small turbot and a boiled edge-bone of beef," the actor played the part assigned him in the programme with his accustomed zeal and thoroughness. When the "edge-bone of beef" returned to the kitchen, not a trace remained to the joint of its original proportions, for though he loved venison more, Pope loved the homelier viand much. Two minutes later the gluttoned actor rested his eyes on a superb haunch of venison. It was hard for him to see such fare, and know that he could not eat a single slice of it. It was still harder to feel himself the object of a cruel and clumsy insult. He could not control his emotion. "A friend of twenty years' standing," he ejaculated hysterically, as tears rolled down his cheeks, "a friend of twenty years standing and to be treated in this manner!"

At present, when we wish to be rid of an old acquaintance we cease to ask him to dinner, instead of inviting him with a view to put an elaborate affront upon him. The mediævalists, by the way, had some equally curious and barbarous modes of dismissing offensive trenchermen. Baptista Porta

gives *six* different processes for “driving parasites and flatterers from great men’s tables.” The *first* was to induce the unwelcome guest to wipe his wet face and hands with a napkin artfully prepared with powdered vitriol and galls, so that it “made his face and hands as black as a cole.” The *second* was to give him three hours before dinner a cup of wine, medicated with bella-donna, *i.e.*, to poison him slightly, so that on sitting down to the feast his attempts to masticate would occasion the agonising spasms of incipient lock-jaw. Porta affirms from experience that it is a mere popular error to suppose that a greedy parasite can be deprived of his appetite by merely placing under his trencher “a needle that hath often sowed the winding sheet of the dead.” The *third* process for discomfiting the intrusive trencherman was to powder his meats with powdered root of wake-robbin, which would not fail to “bite his mouth,” “skin his tongue,” and compel him to gape in a highly ludicrous manner. The same result could be obtained by giving “the enemy” a salad, containing leaves of cuckowpint cut small. The *fourth* method was to smear his knife and napkin with colocynth, so as to impart “a filthy and abominable taste to whatever he ate.” Or by the *fifth* process, a host might humiliate an odious visitor by anointing his cup with a mucilage of milk of figs and gum-tragacanth which



would cause the vessel to stick to the wretch's lips. "When he hath done drinking," says this professor of the Art of Tormenting one's Guests, "he shall hardly be able to pull the cup off." The *sixth* and last process was to give a repulsive and verminous appearance to the viands set before the object of insult, by sprinkling them with powder of dried horse's blood and small pieces of cat-gut. "If you cut harp-strings small," says the Neapolitan Magician, "and strew them on hot flesh, the heat will twist them and they will move like worms."

Respecting the cost of dinners amongst the old English there is an unfortunate absence of information. But during the last two hundred years the prices of barely sufficient dinners, good dinners, and luxurious dinners have not increased greatly in London. From one of the Harleian tracts it appears that a curate, or poor scholar, in Charles the First's London paid fourpence for a dinner of meat and bread, and a farthing for attendance—charges nearly, if not precisely, equivalent to the price which a gentleman of narrow means pays for a small steak and potatoe at a cheap, though decent, dining-room of the Victorian town. At Whitehall, under Mistress Elizabeth Cromwell's frugal *régime*, the gentlemen (on board wages) at the steward's table were allowed ten shillings for every mess of ten persons, together with a bottle of sack and two bottles of claret for

the ten messmates, who certainly had no superfluous drink when, as was often the case, they had guests at table. In the days of William the Third and his successor, Anne, the highest prices for dinners at Pontack's and Brand's rarely exceeded two guineas, equal to six or seven guineas of current money. Misson (Ozell's edition) says :—"Those who would dine at one or two guineas per head are handsomely accommodated at our famous Pontack's." A writer in the "Monthly Review" (May, 1737) says that a party of seven gentlemen had recently paid £81 11s. 6d. for their dinner at an expensive hotel, without taking in account the value of their turtle, which was a present. Dr. Doran says of this exorbitant bill, "A party of the same number at the Clarendon, and with turtle charged in the bill, would, in our days, find exceeding difficulty in spending more than £5 each." Perhaps the most sumptuous dinner ever served at the Clarendon was the one given to Lord Chesterfield, on his retirement from the office of Master of the Buckhounds. Count d'Orsay ordered the dinner, which (says the author of the "Art of Dining") was laid for thirty at a cost of six guineas a head. Mr. Hayward also mentions a tradition that an Albion (Aldersgate Street) dinner, given under the auspices of Sir William Curtis, cost the party between thirty and forty pounds apiece. To account for such a

waste of money it should be remarked that the dinner-committee "despatched a special messenger to Westphalia to choose a ham," a fact strikingly illustrative of their determination to throw away as much money as possible on a single meal. The same bootless prodigality distinguished the famous competition-dinners of the Albion (London) and York House (Bath), which resulted in a drawn bet, because the former hotel, having come off victorious in the first, was adjudged to have been beaten in the second course. "Lord Southampton," says Mr. Haywood, "once gave a dinner at the Albion, at ten guineas a-head; and the ordinary price for the best dinner at this house (including wine) is three guineas. In our opinion extravagance adds nothing to real enjoyment; and a first-rate English dinner (exclusive of wine) ought to be furnished for a third of the price." Grimod de la Reynière used to declare that for twenty francs he could buy at a Parisian restaurant of the highest class, a better dinner than Lucullus ever set before a friend in the salon of Apollo.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## COOKS AND THEIR NATURES.

"It is a curious fact that almost all the great artists in this line are erratic, restless, and inconstant. They seldom stay with the same employer, be he as liberal, indulgent, and discriminating as he may. Is it that they sigh like the Macedonian for new worlds to conquer?"—*Vide* "THE ART OF DINING."

"Si les gages d'un cuisinier, et surtout les habitudes de l'artiste vous le rendent trop dispendieux, bornez-vous au *cordons-bleus*. Faites choix d'une cuisinière active, propre."—NOUVEAU ALMANACH DES GOURMANDS.

**S**PEAKING of cooks in the "Manuel des Amphitryons," Grimod de la Reynière observes compassionately, that we enjoy the result of their toils without considering the cost of the ineffable enjoyments they procure for us, and without reflecting that they only derive, from their incessant exertions, impaired health and means of subsistence that are often precarious and almost always moderate. "They spend their best days," he says, "in heat and obscurity, and their last in poverty too often bordering on destitution." The pitiful epicure could only hope it consoled them to reflect that the author of the "Cid" endured a fate no less melancholy.

For centuries we have been indebted to France for the majority of our best cooks. The Anglo-Norman epicures employed Saxon serfs in kitchen drudgery, but their chefs were Frenchmen or Italians. The same practice prevailed amongst our nobility when the victorious and vanquished races had become one people. Harrison speaks of the “musicall-headed Frenchmen and strangers” who rendered culinary service to the English lords of Elizabethan time. Of the forty-five chefs mentioned by Mr. Hayward for having achieved eminence in this country during the present century, only five are English, whilst the other forty are French.

In our Catholic period, artistes of Italian birth, who came hither in the train of Roman ecclesiastics, formed a considerable minority of the foreign cooks retained in the establishments of our religious magnates, and in houses that affected the humours and tastes of the mitred hierarchy. But on our rupture with Rome the southerners returned to their native land, and for generations their cookery was denounced by our ancestors with equal violence and ignorance. The genius of cookery, as we have before observed, moves from the south northwards. Our Norman cookery was taken from ancient Rome. And before France took the lead in culinary science



in the sixteenth century, her noble *gourmets* got their chefs from the boot of Europe.

Montaigne's cook, who figures so drolly in one of the scholar's essays, was a native of Italy, and had served in Cardinal Caraffa's kitchen before entering the French seigneur's household. Like the chefs of ancient Rome whose affectations diverted Juvenal and Terence, this artiste was grandly eloquent about the dignity of his vocation, and would discourse for hours together on the mysteries of his art. "He made," says the essayist, who never checked his servant's loquacity with an inopportune smile, "a learned distinction of the several sorts of appetite, of that which a man has before he begins to eat, and of those after the second and third service; the means simply to satisfy the first, and then raise and quicken the other two; the ordering of sauces, first in general, and then proceeded to the qualities of the several ingredients and their effects; the difference of salads according to their seasons; which of them ought to be served hot and which cold; the manner of their garnishment and decoration; after which he entered upon the order of the whole service." Continuing a description not more true of the particular cook than of Carême, Ude, Grimod, Dumas, and all the culinary professors and amateurs who have in later times enlightened the world on their special subject,

Montaigne adds, "And all this was set out with lofty and magnificent words, the very same we make use of when we discourse of the government of an empire."

In magniloquence of this kind, Ude equalled the most florid of the old writers on cookery, and has not been surpassed by any other later scribe. He maintained that to compose an oratorio or opera was an easier feat than to invent a new entrée, and that a man of the requisite natural endowments could sooner qualify himself to compete with the Royal Academicians than with the chief operators in cookery. "I shall," he observes, "demonstrate the difficulty of the art by some observations on other arts. Music, painting, and *mechanics in general* possess professors under twenty years of age, whereas in the first line of cooking pre-eminence never occurs under thirty. We see daily at the concerts and academies young men and women who display the greatest abilities; but in our line, nothing but the most consummate experience can elevate a man to the rank of Chief-Professor." Prescriptions are dispensed by weight and measure, but dishes owe their virtue to sympathy, tact, nervous sensibility, and momentary inspirations. "The pharmacist," remarks Louis Eustache, "is obliged to weigh every ingredient that he employs, as he does not like to taste it;

the cook, on the contrary, must taste often, as the reduction increases the flavour. It would be blind work, indeed, without tasting; the very best soups in which you have omitted to put salt, are entirely without flavour; *seasoning is in cookery what chords are in music*; the best instrument in the hands of the best professor, without its being in tune, is insipid." Speaking of Gonthier d'Andernach, whom he designates "the Father of Cookery in France," and "a star which shone in the Reformation," Ude exclaims with emotion, "What Bacon was to philosophy, Dante and Petrarch to poetry, Michael Angelo and Raphael to painting, Columbus and Gama to geography, Copernicus and Galileo to astronomy, Gonthier was in France to the art of cookery. Gonthier appeared to raise the culinary edifice, as Descartes, a century after him, raised that of philosophy. Both introduced doubt—the one in the moral, the other in the political world." Ude, by the way, was the first gastronomic writer to define clearly and distinctively the terms "entrée" and "entremet." It was usual for authors to use these very different words loosely, as though they were nearly, if not altogether, synonymous; till Ude declared authoritatively that whilst the former described "any dish of meat, fowl, game, or fish, dressed and cooked for the first course," the latter was applicable to "all vegetable dishes, jellies,

pastries, salads, prawns, lobsters, and in general to everything that appears in the second course, except the roast." To Ude's honour, also, be it remembered that he was the reformer who substituted the light buffet-supper of sandwiches and sweets at fashionable routs, for the heavier and less accessible repast hitherto served on tables to such of the guests as could approach them. The artiste carried this important reform whilst he was in the Earl of Sefton's service; and he was chiefly moved to effect it by chivalric regard for the ladies, who often went without supper rather than expose their toilettes to disarrangement and injury in a struggle for seats.

Cooks may be managed in various ways. They may be flogged, flouted, physicked, fed, or flattered. The floggings may be given with whip or tongue—with the whip in lands where patriarchal government prevails from the court to the cabin; with the tongue in communities whose high civilization forbids the master to correct his servants with corporal punishment. In ancient Rome the cook guilty of serving a flavourless soup or insipid patina was usually warmed with the scutica, or torn with the "flagellum;" the punishment being sometimes inflicted in the presence of the injured and resentful feasters. The same discipline prevailed throughout Europe in the Middle Ages, and lingers even yet

amongst its ruder peoples. In Russia, where no one but the Czar is, in theory, altogether exempt from the lash, cooks are occasionally beaten for indolence or remissness. A staggering, though not discredited, writer asserts that it is not unusual in Poland for a gentleman of the old school to avenge himself for a bad dinner by beating his chef, who no sooner escapes from the scene of punishment than he makes all his subordinates participate in his disgrace by drubbing them soundly. But the English gourmand, unless he lives in a West Indian colony, cannot relieve his anger and correct culinary vices in this primitive fashion. The tongue is the only instrument with which he can lawfully flagellate his cook for the most heinous delinquencies.

And his interest, no less than his dignity, counsels him to refrain from angry expostulations with faulty ministrants who are seldom improved by scornful or vehement words. Just as gentlemen prefer to sell badly-trained horses rather than suffer the pain and humiliation of flogging them, the self-respecting master, instead of scolding him, dismisses the servant who tries his temper. It is far better to physic than to flout such defaulters. Dr. Kitchener was a strong advocate of the medical discipline mentioned in an earlier Chapter. "If," says the Doctor, "you find your cook neglect his business, and that his ragouts are too highly spiced and salted, and his



cooking has too much of the 'haut goût,' you may be sure that his Index of Taste wants regulating,—his palate has lost its sensibility, and it is high time to call in the assistance of the apothecary."

Even in countries where law and sentiment countenance its use, harshness never succeeds with a chef of natural ability. Always nervous and highly sensitive, and often morbidly vain, he is depraved by unkindness, but may be stimulated to incredible exertions, and even rendered consistently virtuous, by discreet administrations of eulogy and *very* lenient censure. His trivial shortcomings, when infrequent, should be overlooked; his grave faults should be treated as his misfortunes rather than as sins, and should be brought under his consideration with the delicacy that qualifies the expostulations of friendship, and with the tenderness of parental admonishment. On the other hand, whilst receiving proper acknowledgments of his ordinary endeavours, he should from time to time be praised cordially, even rapturously for exceptional efforts. It is far better to flatter him egregiously than to let him imagine himself the victim of indifference. The Duke of Wellington could never keep his chief cooks because of his want of special discernment and sympathy. Felix was not the only chef who was successively pained, piqued, exasperated, and driven from Apsley House by its master's coldness.

“My Lord,” Felix exclaimed one morning to Lord Seaford after seeking an interview with that genial patron of gastronomy, “I have left Apsley House. I could bear it no longer. Take me again into your service, my Lord. I want no salary. My only desire is to serve you once more.”

“My poor fellow,” Lord Seaford returned, “dry your eyes and tell me all about it. What is the matter? Has the Duke been finding fault?”

“Oh no, my Lord,” Felix exclaimed passionately; “I would have stayed with him if he had honoured me with a reproof. But he takes no notice of me. He passes over me, as if I were a door-mat. I serve him a dinner that would make Ude or Francatelli burst with envy, *and he says nothing*. I serve him with a poor dinner, dressed, and badly dressed, by a maid-cook, *and he says nothing*. If he were a hundred times a hero I could not serve such a master and preserve my powers. My body might live, but my genius would die.” It is needless to add that Lord Seaford granted Felix his desire.

Instead of driving them to despair by his coldness, the Duke of Beaufort seized every opportunity to compliment his chefs. One of his subtle flatteries was to invite them to communicate their ideas to him as soon as they had conceived them. His Grace was roused one night from his first slumber by a knock at his bedroom door, and, on

asking quickly what was the matter, learnt that his untimely visitor was his favourite Neapolitan confectioner.

"It is only I, Signor Duc," said the artiste; "I was at the Opera, and I have been dreaming of the music—Donizetti's music—and I have an idea for a new sorbet. I have named my invention after the composer, and I announce it to your Grace."

"Excellent, my friend," rejoined the patron, "I congratulate you heartily. And now, leave me to dream of your sorbet."

The Prince Regent, at all times a master of the art of complaisance, overflowed with courtesy to his cooks. "My dear Carème," he once said to the famous Frenchman, "your dinner yesterday was superb. Everything you gave me was delicious; but you will make me die of indigestion." The compliment was perfect, far more acceptable to the chef's vanity than any speech that made no reference to the indigestibility of some of the cook's productions. No flatterer could go further than to declare himself powerless to abstain from meats which he knew would eventually kill him. "Mon Prince," returned Carème, bowing low, "my duty is to flatter your appetite, not to control it." But even the complaisance of the finest gentleman of Europe could not reconcile Carème to our grey skies and foggy atmosphere, which covered him with melan-

choly at the Brighton Pavilion, and with dismal wretchedness in Carlton House. Though the Prince sought to detain him with the offer of a pension for life, equal to his salary, the artiste insisted on returning to the blue heavens and animating air of his native land. When he had assumed the crown and kingly title, George the Fourth again invited Carème to govern his kitchen, but in vain. "Sire," the artiste wrote from Paris, "it is the honour of my old age and my life that the King of Great Britain deigns to remember my services."

The prize system, which in the later years has been so largely employed to stimulate the genius of thinkers and actors in every department, had its origin in the munificent policy that Sardanapalus exercised towards the culinary profession. The Assyrian despot offered a reward of a thousand pieces of gold to the artiste who should invent a new dish. In the same manner the Regent Duke of Orleans acknowledged merit and promoted virtue by giving a piece of gold as an honorarium to the chef for every dish of superlative goodness. It was the fashion at his table for every guest to drop a "pièce d'or" in the empty plate, from which he had just taken a delicacy of singular excellence.

At Russian and German tables of the highest rank, it has long been the custom to print in the

*carte*, by the side of each item of the menu, the name of the particular chef who dressed it,—an admirable device for stimulating each artiste in establishments that maintain several cooks. George the Second, too dull a man to have originated so ingenious an expedient for distinguishing merit, and for according to each of a score emulous cooks the shame or glory of his achievements, had however enough sagacity to introduce the practice into England. During one of his periodical passages from England to Germany, the King was informed that the first chef in his suite was too exhausted by sea-sickness to discharge his official duties. What should be done? The Sovereign had ordered Rhenish soup, his favourite *potage*, for dinner; and no one on board, save the prostrate chef, was known to have the secret of its composition. Fortunately, an under-cook of the floating kitchen, named Weston (father of Tom Weston, the player) volunteered to produce a Rhenish soup that should satisfy His Majesty. Ordered to do his best, the volunteer used his opportunity so well that he forthwith lived in the royal favour. On the opportune death of the chef, whose imperfect sense of his professional obligations had not preserved him from sea-sickness, Weston was appointed to the vacant place without regard to the wishes of the steward of the palace. “That man,” exclaimed the sove-



reign, "shall be my first cook, because he makes excellent Rhenish soup." Such advancement could not fail to make the favourite a mark for jealousy and kitchen intrigue. A conspiracy was formed to discredit him with his patron. If the King grumbled at entrée or entremet, he was sure to be informed by a lacquey in attendance that Weston had prepared the faulty dish. "Strange," said the King, who suspected the plot, "that Weston is always degulbrit; henzford my googs shall mark deir dishes here as dey do in Hanover." The reform had the anticipated result. From the date of the change Weston was safe. If he produced his "failures," he at least escaped reproof. For the King was never heard to depreciate a performance which the *carte* assigned to his protégé.

In one of the most diverting passages of his "Table Traits," Dr. Doran has shown how large a proportion of the noble celebrities of Louis the Fourteenth's and Louis the Fifteenth's courts are commemorated in the names of culinary dainties dedicated to them by successive inventors. Queens of virtue and duchesses without virtue, famous generals and frivolous chamberlains figure in this list of gastronomic notabilities, which opens with the Marquis de Béchamel, the "rich financier" and "great epicure," whose cream-sauce for turbot and cod has been extolled with grandiloquence by a

score historians of the table, including De la Reynière and Ude. By-the-way, the last-named author expresses his surprise that so few of the gastronomic leaders of England have been honoured thus fitly with culinary dedications, which were no less fashionable in ancient Rome than modern Paris. In this matter the French chefs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were mere imitators of the Apician artistes who, as the “*De Opsoniis*” testifies, used to name their finest performances after such persons as Varro, Julius Matius, Julius Fronto, Celsinius, Vitellius, Commodus, Didius Julianus, and Elagabalus.

Chefs are divisible into two classes, the prodigal, who scornfully decline to trouble themselves with questions of expense; and the economical, who delight in producing grand results with modest materials. Soyer, who wrote a cookery-book for the million whilst controlling the kitchen of a West End club, may be regarded as a type of the ingenious and condescending artistes who, representing the culinary ideas and principles of the nineteenth century, were unknown in previous times. Of the older and far more numerous class—who, indeed, constituted the entire order of chefs before the dawn of political science and the birth of utilitarian thought—Bertrand may be taken as a brilliant example. Whilst holding office in the household of

the Prince de Soubise, famous to this day for his "côtelettes," Bertrand was required to exhibit to the Prince his scheme of operations for a supper. "Merciful heavens!" exclaimed the Prince at the first item of his cook's list of requisitions, "what can you want with fifty hams for a single supper? I am not going to feast a regiment of soldiers?"

"True, my Prince," was the answer, uttered with delightful sang-froid, "and only one ham will appear on the table; but I shall require the other forty-nine for my gravies, for my decorations, for my——"

"Bertrand," the Prince interposed sharply, "you are robbing me, and this preposterous demand is disallowed."

Controlling, with a great effort, his indignation at such unprincely niggardliness, Bertrand answered lightly, "Ah, monseigneur, you know little of my resources. Bid me do so, and I will put all those fifty hams into a crystal bottle no larger than your thumb."

What could be urged in reply? Of course the Prince ceased to object, and Bertrand had his way.

Many a writer has reproduced Madame de Sévigny's account of Vatel's heroic death. But the story may be repeated again. Indeed, it cannot be told too often. For several years the chef of the Prince de Condé, Vatel was endowed with honour

even more sensitive than his palate. The King was Condé's guest, and Vatel was making strenuous exertions to maintain his master's reputation, when a series of misadventures closed in a dismal though ennobling tragedy. The number of the company greatly exceeding the Prince's expectations, the arrangements at the first dinner were defective. Some of the inferior tables had no roast, a fact that distressed Vatel immensely, causing him to exclaim repeatedly, "I am dishonoured; this is a disgrace that I cannot endure." At night the rain occasioned a failure of the fire-works, on which 16,000 francs had been expended—a misfortune that troubled the chef, although it was no affair of his special department. Everything to his excited brain seemed to be going wrong. On the following morning, though Vatel had despatched messengers to half-a-score sea-ports for *matériel*, it appeared that no adequate supply of sea-fish would arrive in time for dinner. "Is that all?" Vatel inquired despairingly of an inferior purveyor whom he had, in his agitation, mistaken for the chief fish-caterer. Unaware that supplies of fish were coming from several quarters, the man answered gloomily, "Yes, I could get no more." The cruel answer was more than Vatel could endure. Hastening from the giver of the agonising intelligence, Vatel encountered De Gourville, to whom he remarked, "Monsieur, I

shall never survive this disgrace." Five minutes later the chef was lying in his private room dead, from three wounds which he had given himself in the region of the heart. Fixing his sword in the door of his chamber, he had thrown himself on its point, twice without mortal effect, a third time with a desperate resolution that caused the blade to penetrate the seat of life. He had escaped that hateful thing, "a shamed life," by self-murder. The breath had scarcely left his body, when messengers arrived from all quarters with an abundance of sea-fish. Indeed, the chef's suicide was discovered by the servant who went in search of him, in order that the fish might be inspected and distributed. Those who would learn how Condé surrendered himself to despair, and the Duke shed tears on hearing the mournful incident, may consult Madame de Sévigny's epistle on the subject. At the present date, far from compassionating his end, we congratulate the cook on an event that placed him amongst heroes. Such a death was alone needed to ensure his immortality.

It is the mistake of many persons to suppose that "cordon-bleu," in its culinary sense, signifies an admirable cook of either sex. The term is applicable only to the very few female cooks who have attained to the highest degree of excellence in their art. Trained by Héliot—some of whose master-



pieces are recorded in Carème's "Parallèle de la Cuisine Ancienne et Moderne," and by other chefs of similar brilliance, to believe that culinary prowess of the first order was beyond the reach of woman-kind, Louis the Fifteenth used to speak disdainfully of women-cooks, till Madame Dubarry gave him a lesson that modified his opinion on this point, and raised her sex in his esteem. The King had eaten with unusual gust a dinner to which Madame Dubarry had invited him, when he exclaimed rapturously,

"Who is this new cuisinier of yours? Let me know his name, that he may henceforth be one of our royal household?"

The lady's triumph was complete, for the whole repast was the performance of a female artiste.

"Ah, I have caught you!" she said, laughing merrily. "It is no cuisinier, but a cuisinière, to whom your Majesty must give fit recompense. You made my negro, Zamore, Governor of Luciennes. Give my cuisinière a *cordons-bleu*."

Though the cuisinière was not raised to the Order to which her protectress thought her entitled, she acquired enduring distinction in being the first *cordons-bleu* of gastronomic story, and in winning for eminent cooks of her sex a title that still remains peculiarly their own.

More fortunate in finding a bard to preserve his

name whilst perpetuating his fame, than Madame Dubarry's "*cordons-bleus*," was Edward Heardson ("Ned" of the "Beef-Steaks,") whose virtues are commemorated in the following epitaph by Captain Charles Morris, the anacreontic songster :—

" His last steak done, his fire raked out and dead,  
Dish'd for the worms himself, lies Honest Ned,  
We, who partook of all his fleshly toils,  
Received his bastings, too, and shared his broils,  
Now in our turn a mouthful carve and trim,  
And dress at Phoebus' fire our steak for him.  
His heart, which well deserved a noble grave,  
Was watchful, patient, modest, just, and brave,  
And never did earth's wide maw a morsel gain,  
Of kindlier juices or more tender grain.  
His tongue, where duteous friendship humbly dwelt,  
Charm'd all who heard the faithful zeal he felt.  
Still, to whatever end his chops he moved,  
'Twas all well seasoned, relished, and approved.  
This room his heaven ! when threatening fate drew nigh,  
And death's chill shade had dimmed his lingering eye,  
His fondest hopes, betrayed with many a tear,  
Were that his life's last spark might glimmer here ;  
And the last words that choked his parting sigh,  
' Oh, at your feet, dear masters, let me die.' "

Mr. Arnold's notes to these lines record that Ned was a clever pugilist, and demonstrated his attachment to the Sublime Steaks by causing himself, in his closing hour, to be brought into the Society's dining-room, where he drew his last breath.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## COOKERY BOOKS.

"The subject of cookery having been very naturally introduced at a table where Johnson, who boasted of the niceness of his palate, owned that 'he always found a good dinner,' he said, 'I could write a better book of cookery than has ever been written; it should be a book on philosophical principles. Pharmacy is now made much more simple. Cookery could be made so too. . . . Women can spin very well; but they cannot make a good book of cookery.'"—BOSWELL'S "LIFE OF JOHNSON."

"He who conceives it is a desiderium  
 To salt his mangoes and his slaterium;  
 Or, still more curious, who aspires to make  
 Chantilly baskets, or a Shrewsbury cake;  
 Or whip his cream, his syllabub, and trifle,  
 The sheets of Rundle and of Smith may rifle.  
 To him the 'Housewife's Pocket-Book' I lend,  
 Or the last 'Pastrycook's Assistant' send.  
 If more receipts he wishes let him seek 'em  
 In that great work, 'The Lady's Vademecum.'  
 If 'tis a female would her sex surpass,  
 I'll give, inestimable boon! my Glass."

THE BANQUET, In three Cantos. (1819.)

AT the present time the literature of the English table would fill the shelves of a large cabinet. Three centuries since the book-collector found it difficult to fill a single small shelf with culinary books known to English housewives. The "Forme of Cury," in different degrees of incompleteness

was ready to his hand. He had half-a-dozen manuscript tracts to which reference has been made in the previous pages of this work; and he could bring together twenty or more collections of receipts gathered from imperfect copies of "The Forme" and "The Roll" of Cury. But the oldest of the printed books which the modern epicure delights to place in his library of English gastronomers came from Elizabethan presses.

Abraham Veale's "Proper New Booke of Cookery" (1575) was followed, after an interval of twenty years, by "The Good Huswives Handmaid, for Cookerie in Her Kitchin, in Dressing all Manner of Meat." That there was a general and strong demand for new cookery-books towards the close of the sixteenth century, appears from the quickness with which new collections of receipts, or new editions of old collections, followed one another from the bookstalls to the pantry during the last years of Elizabeth's reign. This was the period which gave birth to "The Widdowes' Treasure; plentifully furnished with Sundry Precious and Approved Secrets in Physicke and Chirurgery, for the Health and Pleasure of Mankind," a treatise whose culinary worth was proclaimed by the author's announcement on the title-page, "Hereunto are adjoined sundrie prittie practices and conclusions of cookerie, with many profitable and wholesome

medicines for sundry diseases in catell." The generous art was treated more respectfully in the "Good Huswife's Jewel" (1596), "wherein," says the title-page, "is to be found most excellent and rare devices for conceites in cookery, found out by the practice of Thomas Dawson. Whereunto is adjoynd sundry approved receits for many soueraine oyles, and the way to distil many precious waters, with divers approved medicines for many diseases." Cookery precedes medicine in Thomas Dawson's title-page; and though he gave the housewife seasonable instruction for the cure of human maladies, he disdained to diversify his orders for soups and pasties, with directions for the making of horse-balls. In the second part of his elegant performance (1597), Mr. Dawson is altogether silent on medical matters. But the practice of intermingling medical and culinary instruction, in literature specially addressed to matrons and housewives, prevailed for more than another century. "The Queen's Closet Opened: Incomparable Secrets in Physic, Chirurgery, Preserving and Candyng," a popular manual with housewives in the later decades of the seventeenth century, was published in 1671, together with "A Queen's Delight" and "The Compleat Cook." With a doctor's sensitiveness for the honour of his profession, Sir John Hill refrained from making his hand-book of



cookery a manual of domestic medicine; but its earlier editions contained "A receipt against the Plague," and two receipts for "the certain cure for the bite of a mad dog." One of these preservatives against hydrophobia was long famous as Dr. Mead's receipt. "Let the patient," it says, "be blooded at the arm nine or ten ounces. Take the herb, called in Latin '*lichen cinereus terrestris*,' in English, ash-coloured ground liverwort, clean, dried, and powdered, half-an-ounce. Mix these well together, and divide the powder into four doses, one of which must be taken every morning fasting, for four mornings successively, in half-a-pint of cow's warm milk. After these four doses, the patient must go into the cold bath, or a cold spring or river every morning fasting for a month. He must be dipt all over, but not stay in (with his head above water) longer than half a minute, if the water be very cold. After this he must go in three times for a fortnight longer. N.B.—The lichen is a very common herb, and grows generally in sandy and barren soils all over England. The right time to gather it is in the months of October and November."

The cookery books of the seventeenth century are numerous. To give the titles of all of them would be to fill a page to little purpose. The student, however, may be directed to the "Delightfull Daily Exercise for Ladies' Gentlewomen" (1621), John

Murrell's "New Book of Cookery" (1630), "A Book of Cookery and the Order of Meats" (1650), "Archimagirus Anglo-Gallicus" (1658), by the pseudo Sir Theodore Mayerne, Robert May's "Accomplisht Cook; or, the Art and Mystery of Cookery" (1660), the "Court and Kitchen of Elizabeth, commonly called Joan Cromwell" (1664), the "Closet of Sir Kenelm Digbie, Knight, Opened" (1669), Giles Rose's "Perfect Schoole of Instructions for Officers of the Mouth" (1682), the "Accomplished Ladies Delight in Preserving, Physick, Beautifying, and Cookery" (1684), the "Young Cook's Monitor" (1692), and John Evelyn's "Acetaria: a Discourse of Sallets" (1699.)

To his honour be it recorded that Lord Bacon was one of the seventeenth century writers on cookery. The philosopher who touched upon every subject of human interest, and adorned whatever he touched, gave the world some notable papers on culinary affairs in his "Natural History." Together with minute directions for making "Chicken in Beer," (the China ale of subsequent writers), and for preparing such drinks as almond milk, mint milk, rose milk, and egg wine (flip), he gives receipts for mortrews and mince-pies. "A mortress," he says, "made with the brawn of capon, stamped and strained, and mingled, after it is made with a like quantity, at the least, of almond butter, is an excel-

lent meat to nourish those that are weak, better than blankmanger, or jelly; and so is the cullice of cocks, boiled thick with the like mixture of almond butter; for the mortress or cullice, of itself, is more savoury and strong, and not so fit for nourishing of weak bodies, but the almonds that are not of so high a taste do excellently qualify it."

Of mince-pies he observes, "mincing of meat, as in pies and buttered mincemeat, saveth the grinding of the teeth; and therefore, no doubt, it is more nourishing, especially in age, or to them that have weak teeth; but the butter is not so proper for weak bodies, and therefore it were good to moisten it with a little claret wine, pill of lemon or orange, cut small, sugar, and a very little cinnamon or nutmeg. As for chuets, which are likewise minced meat, instead of butter and fat, it is good to moisten them partly with cream, or almond, pistachio milk, or barley or maize-cream; adding a little coriander seed and caraway seed, and a very little saffron."

No reader of the foregoing pages requires to be told that the eighteenth century produced several new cookery books, and several writers who illustrated the culinary practices of former times, and delighted to record the curiosities and anomalies of *gourmandise*. In early years of that age, Queen Anne's physician, Lister, was at work on his learned edition of the "De Opsoniis" (1710); and in its

later years the London antiquaries paid especial attention to the cuisine of mediæval England. Pegge published his edition of "The Forme of Cury" in 1780; and Warner produced the "*Antiquitates Culinariæ*" in 1791. Having described the processes of the Roman kitchen with his pen, to the lively diversion and contempt of Dr. King (who, as a scholar, might have exhibited more respect for a careful student and a scholarly performance), Lister provoked his persecutor yet further by illustrating them with banquets prepared for his table in classic fashion. At a later period of the same century, Dr. Akenside, who pursued the delights of the table whilst cherishing the pleasures of the imagination, braved the ridicule of society by repeating Lister's Apician revivals. Even as the earlier physician found an ungenerous critic in the author of "The Art of Cookery," the later doctor encountered a bitter and offensive censor in Smollett, who caricatured him in "Peregrine Pickle" as the physician who gives a dinner after the manner of the ancients.

Enough has been said in a previous chapter of Mrs. Glasse's "Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy" (1745), which remained for more than half-a-century our chief authority on good cheer. Mrs. Elizabeth Cleland, who published "A New and Easy Method of Cookery" (1759), was only a

shameless pirate of Sir John Hill's performance, which she reproduced without acknowledgment and with few improvements. But though it had a considerable sale, the "New and Easy Method" did not put Mrs. Glasse's book out of credit of fashion. In spite of her several unscrupulous competitors, Mrs. Glasse was obeyed meekly, and quoted reverently, by English housewives, until after a long tenure of popularity she was superseded by Mrs. Rundle, who produced in an early year of the present century, and in a provincial town, the cookery-book which, on its publication by a fashionable London publisher, made her famous amongst women.

Mr. Grant, a gentleman who has written with equal rashness and confidence about things of earth and things of heaven, tells in his "Portraits of Public Characters," a strange and scarcely accurate story of Mrs. Rundle's intercourse with her London publisher, "The case," says our artist in portraiture, "of Mr. Murray in connection with Mrs. *Rumbold's* (*sic*) book of cookery has often been before the public, but considerable misconception, I believe, still exists on the subject. The facts as communicated to me by one who knew a good deal of Mr. Murray's business transactions at the time are these:—the authoress *sent the manuscript* of the work to Mr. Murray, with a request that if he thought the work worthy of publication he would



bring it out as soon as convenient. There was not only no specification of any sum for copyright, but not the slightest hint was given that anything would be expected for it in the *event of its being deemed worthy of publication*. The book was brought out and at once obtained a large sale; and Mr. Murray, acting with a generosity which is anything but common among publishers, sent the authoress a cheque for £500. Instead of appreciating the generous act, the lady, finding the work had been successful, immediately brought an action against Mr. Murray to recover the copyright. She was unsuccessful in her suit; the verdict was with the defendant. Had Mrs. *Rumbold* not dragged Mr. Murray into a court of law and sought to compel him to relinquish the copyright of the work, it is exceedingly probable, considering the continued success of the work and the publisher's proverbial liberality, that the first cheque of £500 would not have been the last. The work has had a most extraordinary sale. I believe it is now in its sixty-eighth edition, and the entire number of copies sold verges on 150,000. It is supposed that Mr. Murray must have cleared by this volume the enormous sum of £25,000."

On one point Mr. Grant is certainly wrong. The book was written by a Devonshire lady named Rundle, *not* Rumbold. Again, the gentleman who

knew so much of Mr. Murray's business, was probably in error as to the circumstances under which the work was submitted to the publisher's notice. The book was published originally at Exeter. Its third edition was published in that town in 1808; and the work had achieved a great reputation in the West of England more than twenty years before Mr. Murray in 1829 offered *his* first edition to a larger public. Knowing the history of the work, he perused it for the first time *in print*, and had no need to pass judgment on the lady's manuscript. As to the writer's expectations of profit from her labours it may be observed that she published it in Exeter, and re-published it in London with the resolution to draw no money from the venture. Mr. Murray's first edition of the "New System," by "a lady," contains the preface which appeared in the original edition, and ends with the words: "This little work would have been a treasure to herself when she first set out in life, and she therefore hopes it may be useful to others. In that idea it is given to the public, and she will receive from it no emolument, so she trusts it will escape without censure." A lady of condition, Mrs. Rundle lived in times when fortunate gentlewomen made it a point of honour not to earn money.

For sixteen years from the date of its first pub-

lication in London, Mrs. Rundle's "New System" was emphatically *the* cookery-book of the English household, when it was superseded by a far better book from a lady's pen.

The daughter of a gentleman of Ipswich who had suffered from commercial misadventure, Eliza Acton was still a girl when she was known in Suffolk as the brightest and most energetic of a numerous and clever family. In 1826 she published at Ipswich, by subscription, a volume of "Poems," and then with a full sense of her literary dignity went out into the world to earn her living as a governess. Ten years later, when she had left youth behind her and was on the threshold of middle age, she called at a great publishing house in Paternoster Row, and begged to see Mr. Longman. She had her desire, and slightly startled the great publisher by saying, "Sir, I have called to ask for your advice." On being invited to explain herself, she continued, "I wish to write a book that is really wanted. Give me the subject of a book for which the world has a need, and I will write it for you."

On being asked if she was already an author, she answered resolutely, "I am a poet; but I shall write no more poems. The world does not want poems."

With a scarcely perceptible note of irony in his

civil tone, Mr. Longman said to the lady who was ready to write prose on any subject: "Well, Miss Acton, we want a good cookery-book, and if you write me a really good one I shall be happy to publish it for you."

"Then you advise me to write a cookery-book?"

"I should advise you to do so," was the cautious answer, "*if* I were confident of your ability to write a good one."

Years went on, during which Miss Acton, who before her visit to Paternoster Row had given but little thought to cookery, laboured steadily and systematically in collecting the requisite materials. She wrote to cooks and clever housewives in every part of the country. Old friends in the Eastern Counties, favouring her enterprise, induced great people to tell their cooks to help. New friends in London gave her introductions to epicures from whom she gleaned excellent receipts, and learnt the names of other epicures whom she lost no time in assailing with entreaties for assistance. Ere long there was neither epicure nor chef in England who had not been addressed by Miss Acton with flattering letters or persuasive speech. The result of her exertions, carried on for many years with equal resoluteness and good temper, was the "Modern Cookery in all its Branches," published in 1845, which continues to hold its place in the esteem of

housewives, although so many capital books in the same department of useful literature have appeared during the last twenty-five years. Miss Acton had her reward. She derived from her *one* great work an adequate provision for the remainder of her life.

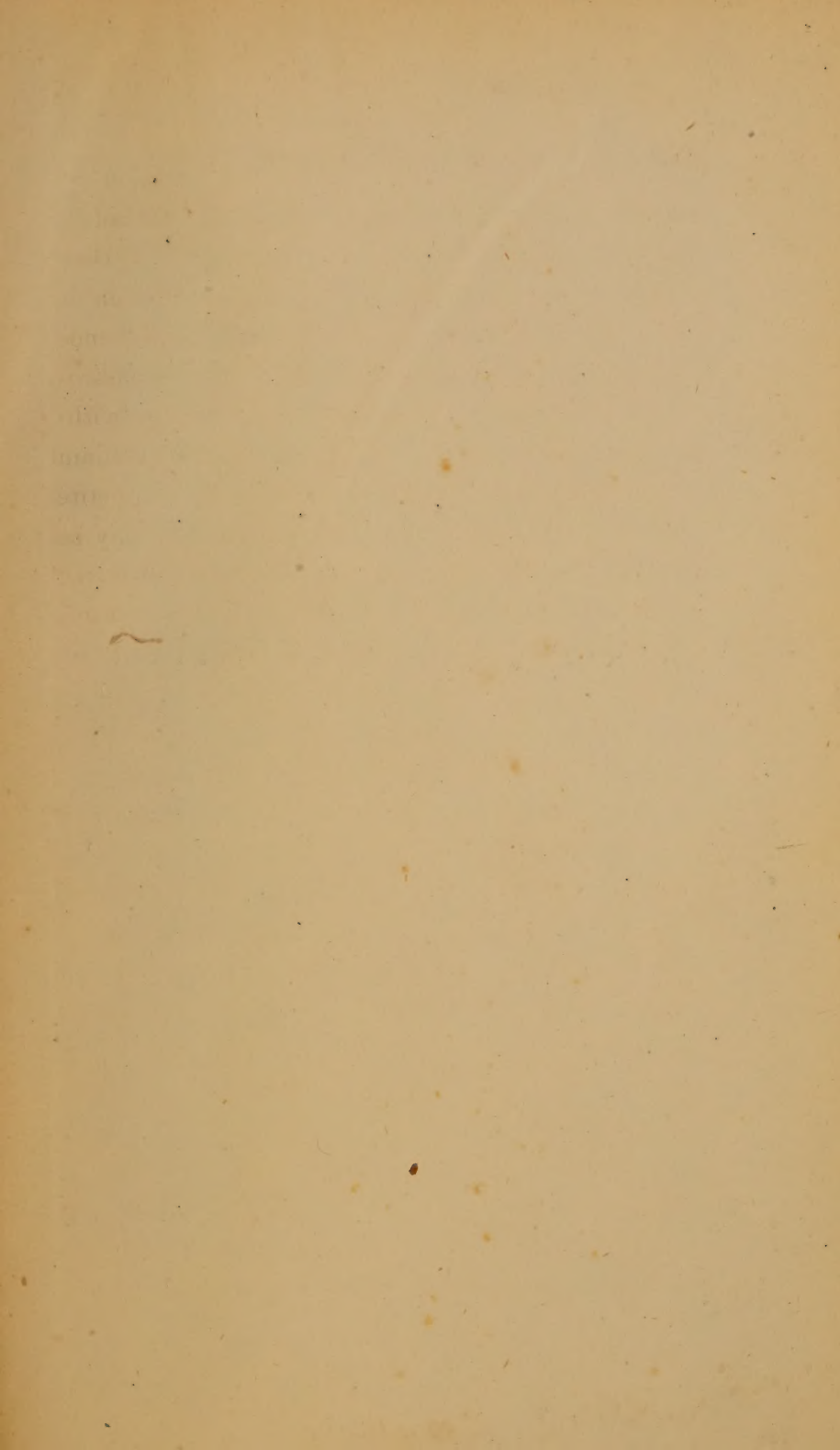
Whilst the number and merit of our cookery-books by English writers have been growing, we have adopted into our gastronomic literature the best Continental treatises on the art. Carème's "Maître d'Hôtel" influenced art scarcely less in England than in France. Even if they had not pursued their calling in this country, and written with special regard for the English public, Ude, Francatelli, and Soyer would have taken rank amongst our culinary chieftains. The "Artistic Cookery" of Urbain Dubois would not have been more completely a part of our literature had he been of English birth.

In another department of gastronomic literature we are largely and directly indebted to France. The works of Brillat-Savarin, De Cussy, and Grimod de la Reynière created on this side the Channel a taste for humorous essays on good living, and for anecdotes of *gourmandise*; a taste which called into existence a new class of lively and entertaining writers. Our "Epicure's Almanack" (1815), and Dr. Kitchener's "Cook's Oracle" (1827), were the direct literary offsprings of the "Almanach des Gour-



mands" and the "Physiologie du Goût." Had he not studied the "Manuel des Amphitryons," Dick Hamelbergius Secundus would never have given us his "Apician Morsels" (1829). The same influence is discernible in the best of Thomas Walker's gastro-nomic papers of "The Original" (1835), notwithstanding the simplicity of his tastes and his disdain for meretricious kickshaws. That the appetite for this diverting literature is not extinct may be inferred from the enduring popularity of such works as Mr. Hayward's "Art of Dining," Dr. Doran's "Table Traits," and Mr. Jerrold's "Epicure's Year-Books."

THE END.





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